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THE
WORKS
OF
JAMES THOMSON.
VOL. II.



THE
WORKS
OF
JAMES THOMSON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

CONTAINING

HIS DRAMATIC WRITINGS.

L O N D O N :

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and SCATCHARD and WHITAKER.

MTCCLXXXVIII.



SOPHONISBA.

A

TRAGEDY.

VOL. II.

B

TO THE
QUEEN.

MADAM,

THE notice, your MAJESTY has condescended to take of the following *Tragedy*, emboldens me to lay it, in the humblest manner, at your MAJESTY's feet. And to whom can this illustrious *Carthaginian* so properly fly for protection, as to a QUEEN, who commands the hearts of a *people*, more powerful at sea than *Carthage*? more flourishing in *commerce* than those *first merchants*? more secure against conquest? and, under a *Monarchy*, more free than a *Commonwealth* itself?

B 2

I dare

4 DEDICATION.

I dare not, nor indeed need I, here attempt a character where both the great and the amiable qualities shine forth in full perfection. All words are faint to speak what is universally felt, and acknowledged, by a happy people. Permit me therefore only to subscribe myself, with the truest zeal and veneration,

MADAM,

Your MAJESTY'S

Most humble,

Most dutiful, and

Most devoted Servant,

JAMES THOMSON.

P R E F A C E.

IT is not my intention, in this preface, to defend any faults that may be found in the following piece. I am afraid there are too many; but those, who are best able to discover, will be most ready to pardon them. They alone know how difficult an undertaking the writing of a tragedy is: and this is a first attempt.

I beg leave only to mention the reason that determined me to make choice of this subject. What pleased me particularly, tho' perhaps it will not be least liable to objection with ordinary readers, was the great simplicity of the story. It is one, regular, and uniform, not charged with a multiplicity of incidents, and yet affording several revolutions of fortune; by which the passions may be excited, varied, and driven to their full tumult of emotion.

This unity of design was always sought after, and admired by the Ancients: and the most eminent among the Moderns, who understood their writings, have chosen to imitate them in this, from an entire conviction that the reason of it must hold good in all ages. And here allow me to translate a Passage from the celebrated *Monsieur Racine*, which contains all that I have to say on this head.

“ We must not fancy that this rule has no other
“ foundation but the caprice of those who made it.
“ Nothing can touch us in tragedy, but what is probable. And what probability is there, that, in one
“ Day, should happen a multitude of things, which
“ could scarce happen in several Weeks? There are
“ some who think that this simplicity is a mark of
“ barrenness of invention. But they do not consider, that, on the contrary, invention consists of
“ making something out of nothing: and that this
“ huddle

“huddle of incidents has always been the refuge of Poets, who did not find in their genius either richness or force enough to engage their spectators, for five acts together, by a simple action, supported by the violence of passions, the beauty of sentiments, and the nobleness of expression.”—I would not be understood to mean that all these things are to be found in my performance: I only shew the reader what I aimed at, and how I would have pleased him, had it been in my power.

As to the character of *Sophonisba*; in drawing it, I have confined myself to the truth of history. It were an affront to the age, to suppose such a character out of nature; especially in a country which has produced so many great examples of public spirit and heroic virtues, even in the softer sex: and I had destroyed her character entirely, had I not marked it with that strong love to her country, disdain of servitude, and inborn aversion to the *Romans*, by which all historians have distinguished her. Nor ought her marrying *Masiniissa*, while her former husband was still alive, to be reckoned a blemish in her character: for, by the laws both of *Rome* and *Carthage*, the captivity of the husband dissolved the marriage of course; as among us, impotence, or adultery; not to mention the reasons of a moral and public nature, which I have put into her own mouth in the scene betwixt her and *Syphax*.

This is all I have to say of the play itself. But I cannot conclude without owning my obligations to those concerned in the representation. They have indeed done me more than justice. Whatever was designed as amiable and engaging in *Masiniissa*, shines out in Mr. *Wilks's* action. Mrs. *Oldfield*, in the character of *Sophonisba*, has excelled what, even in the fondness of an author, I could either wish or imagine. The grace, dignity, and happy variety of her action have been universally applauded, and are truly admirable.

P R O.

P R O L O G U E.

By a FRIEND.

Spoken by Mr. WILLIAMS.

*W*HEN Learning, after the long Gothic night,
Fair, o'er the Western world, renew'd its light,
With arts arising Sophonisba rose:
The tragic muse, returning, wept her woes.
With her th' Italian scene first learn'd to glow;
And the first Tears for her were taught to flow.
Her charms the Gallic Muses next inspir'd:
Corneille himself saw, wonder'd, and was fir'd.
What foreign theatres with pride have shewn,
Britain, by juster title, makes her own.
When Freedom is the cause, 'tis hers to fight;
And hers, when Freedom is the theme, to write.
For this a British Author bids again
The heroine rise, to grace the British scene.
Here, as in life, she breathes her genuine flame:
She asks what bosom has not felt the same?
Asks of the British Youth—Is silence there?
She dares to ask it of the British Fair.

To-night, our home-spun author would be true,
At once, to nature, history, and you.
Well pleas'd to give our neighbours due applause,
He owns their learning, but disdains their laws.
Not to his patient touch, or happy flame,
'Tis to his British heart he trusts for fame.
If France excell him in one free-born thought,
The man, as well as poet, is in fault.

Nature! informer of the Poet's art,
Whose force alone can raise or melt the heart,
Thou art his guide; each passion, every line,
Whate'er he draws to please, must all be thine.
Be thou his judge: in every candid breast,
Thy silent whisper is the sacred test.

The Persons represented.

MASINISSA, King of <i>Maffylia</i> ,	Mr. <i>Wilks</i> .
SYPHAX, King of <i>Mafæfyllia</i> ,	Mr. <i>Mills</i> .
NARVA, Friend to <i>Mafiniffa</i> ,	Mr. <i>Roberts</i> .
SCIPIO, the <i>Roman</i> General,	Mr. <i>Williams</i> .
LÆLIUS, his Lieutenant,	Mr. <i>Bridgwater</i> .

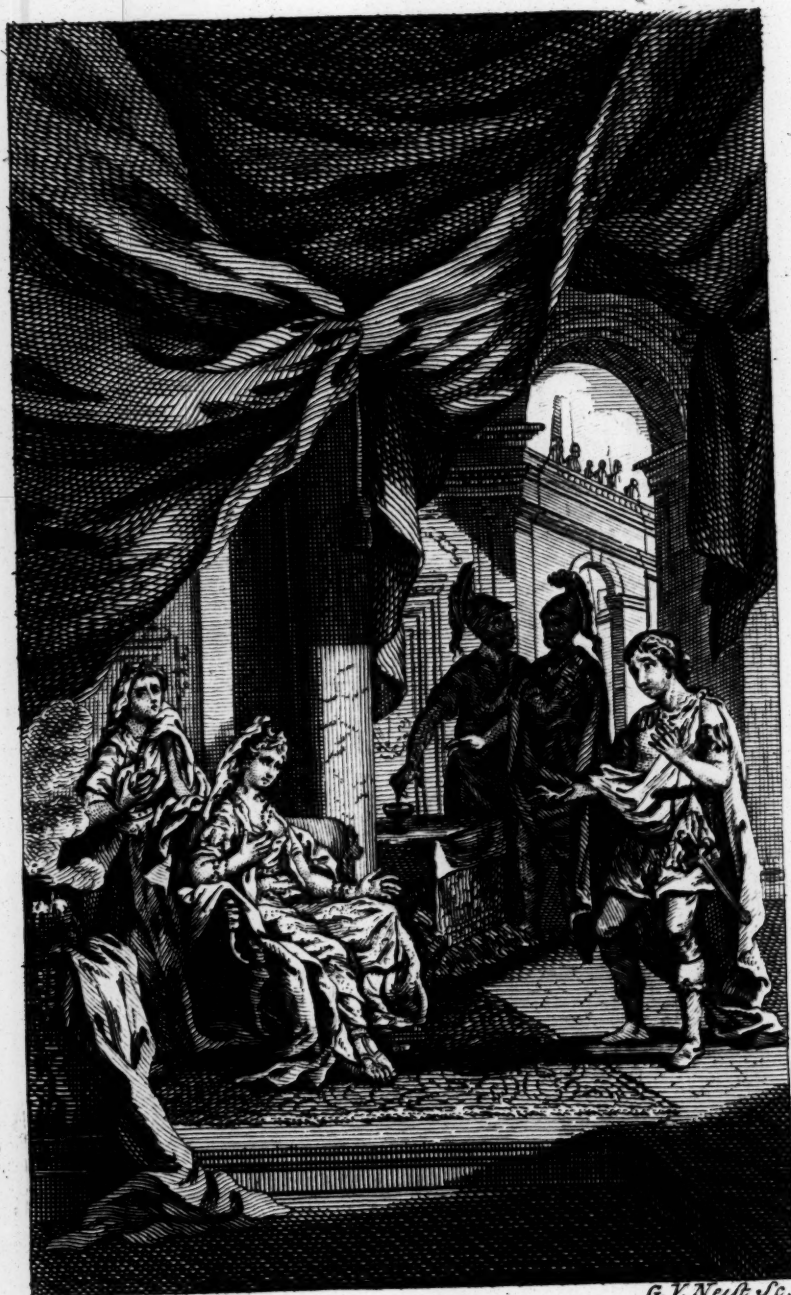
SOPHONISBA,	Mrs. <i>Oldfield</i> .
PHOENISSA, her Friend,	Mrs. <i>Roberts</i> .

Messenger, Slave, Guards, and Attendants.

S C E N E,

The Palace of *CIRTHA*.





G. V. Neyt Sc.

Sophonisba

SOPHONISBA.

A

TRAGEDY.

ACT I. SCENE I.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA.

Soph. **T**HIS hour, *Phænissa*, this important hour,
Or fixes me a queen, or from a throne
Throws *Sophonisba* into *Roman* chains.
Detested thought ! For now, his utmost force
Collected, desperate, distress'd, and sore
From battles lost, with all the rage of war,
Ill-fated *Syphax* his last effort makes.

But say, thou partner of my hopes and fears,
Phænissa, say ; while from the lofty tower,
Our straining eyes the field of battle sought,
Ah, thought you not that our *Numidian* troops
Gave up the bloody field, and scattering fled,
Wild o'er the hills, from the rapacious sons
Of still triumphant *Rome* ?

B 5

Phænissa.

Phæn. Perhaps they wheel'd,
 As is their custom, to return more fierce.
 Distrust not Fortune, while you yet may hope ;
 And think not, Madam, *Syphax* can resign,
 But with his ebbing life, in this last field,
 At once a kingdom, and a queen he loves
 Beyond ambition's brightest wish ; for whom,
 Nor mov'd by threats, nor bound by plighted faith,
 He scorn'd the *Roman* friendship (that fair name
 For slavery) and from th' engagements broke
 Of *Scipio*, fam'd for every winning art,
 The Towering Genius of recover'd *Rome*.

Soph. Oh name him not! These *Romans* stir my blood
 To too much rage. I cannot bear the fortune
 Of that proud people—Said you not, *Phœnissa*,
 That *Syphax* lov'd me ; which would fire his soul,
 And urge him on to death or conquest ? True,
 He loves me with the madness of desire ;
 His every passion is a slave to love ;
 Nor heeds he danger where I bid him go,
 Nor leagues, nor interest. Hence these endless wars,
 These ravag'd countries, these successless fights,
 Sustain'd for *Carthage* ; whose defence alone,
 Not love, engag'd my marriage-vows with his.
 But know you not, that in the *Roman* camp
 I have a lover too ; a gallant, brave,
 And disappointed lover, full of wrath,
 Returning to a kingdom, whence the sword
 Of *Syphax* drove him ?

Phæn. *Mafnissa* ?

Soph. He :

Young *Mafnissa*, the *Massylian* king,
 The first addresser of my youth ; for whom
 My bosom felt a fond beginning with,
 Extinguish'd

Extinguish'd soon, when once by *Scipio's* arts
 Won over, he became the slave of *Rome*.
 E'er since, my heart has held him in contempt;
 And thrown out each idea of his worth,
 That there began to grow: nay had it been
 As much enthrall'd, and soft, as her's who sits
 In secret shades, or by the falling stream,
 And wastes her being in unutter'd pangs,
 I would have broke, or cur'd it of its fondness.

Phæn. Heroic *Sophonisba*!

Soph. No, *Phænissa*;

It is not for the daughter of great *Adruba*,
 Descended from a long illustrious line
 Of *Carthaginian* heroes, who have oft
 Fill'd *Italy* with terror and dismay,
 And shook the walls of *Rome*, to pine in love,
 Like a deluded maid; to give her life,
 And heart high-beating in her country's cause,
 To mean domestic cares, and idle joys,
 Much less to one who stoops his neck to *Rome*,
 An enemy to *Carthage*, *Masini*.

Phæn. Think not I mean to check that glorious flame,
 That just ambition which exalts your soul,
 Glows on your cheek, and lightens in your eye.
 Yet would he had been yours, this rising prince!
 For, trust me, Fame is fond of *Masini*.
 His courage, conduct, deep-experienc'd youth,
 And vast unbroken spirit in distress,
 Still rising stronger from the last defeat,
 Are all the talk and terror too of *Afric*.

Who has not heard the story of his woes?
 How hard he came to his paternal realm:
 Whence soon by *Syphax*' unrelenting hate,
 And jealous *Carthage* driven, he with a few

Fled to the mountains. Then, I think, it was,
 Hemm'd in a circle of impending rocks,
 That all his followers fell, save fifty horse;
 Who, thence escap'd thro' secret paths abrupt,
 Gain'd the *Clupean* plain. There overtook,
 And urg'd by fierce surrounding foes, he burst,
 With four alone, fore wounded, thro' their ranks,
 And all amidst a deep-swoln torrent plung'd.
 Seiz'd with the whirling gulph, two sunk; and two,
 With him obliquely hurried down the stream,
 Swam to the farther shore. Th' astonish'd foes
 Stood check'd and shivering on the gloomy brink,
 And deem'd him lost in the devouring flood.
 Meantime the dauntless, undespairing youth
 Lay in a cave conceal'd; curing his wounds
 With mountain-herbs, and on his horses fed:
 Nor here, even at the lowest ebb of life,
 Stoop'd his aspiring mind. What need I say,
 How once again restor'd, and once again
 Expell'd, among the *Garamantian* hills
 He since has wander'd, till the *Roman* arm
 Reviv'd his cause? and who shall reign alone,
Syphax or he, this day decides.

Soph. Enough.

Thou need'st not blazon thus his fame, *Phœnissa*.
 Were he as glorious as the pride of woman
 Could wish, in all her wantonness of thought;
 The joy of human-kind; wise, valiant, good;
 With every praise, with every laurel crown'd;
 The warrior's wonder, and the virgin's sigh:
 Yet this would cloud him o'er, this blemish all,
 His mean submission to the *Roman* yoke;
 That, false to *Carthage*, *Afric*, and himself,
 With proffer'd hand and knee, he hither led

These

These ravagers of earth.—But while we talk,
The work of Fate goes on; ev'n now perhaps
My dying country bleeds in every vein,
And the proud victor thunders at our gate.

S C E N E II.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA, and to them a MESSENGER
from the battle.

Soph. Ha! Whence art thou? Speak, tho' thy
bleeding wounds
Might well excuse thy tongue.

Mes. Madam, escap'd
From yon dire field, alas! I come——

Soph. No more.
At once thy meaning flashes o'er my soul.
Oh all my vanish'd hopes! oh fatal chance
Of undiscerning war! And is all lost?
An universal ruin?

Mes. Madam, all.
Of all our numerous host scarce one is sav'd.
The King——

Soph. Ah! what of him?

Mes. His fiery steed,
By *Masinissa*, the *Massylian* prince,
Pierc'd, threw him headlong to his clustering foes;
And now he comes in chains.

Soph. O worst of ills!
Absolute gods! All *Afric* is in chains!
The weeping world in chains!—Oh, is there not
A time, a righteous time, reserv'd in fate,
When these oppressors of mankind shall feel
The miseries they give; and blindly fight

For their own fetters too ;—The conquering troops,
How points their motion ?

Mez. At my heels they came,
Loud-shouting, dreadful, in a cloud of dust,
By *Mafiniffa* headed.

Soph. Hark ! arriv'd.
The murmuring cloud rolls frighted to the palace.
Thou bleed'st to death : poor faithful wretch, away,
And dress thy wounds, if life be worth thy care ;
Tho' *Rome*, methinks, will lose a slave in thee.
Would *Sophonisba* were as near the verge
Of boundless and immortal liberty !

S C E N E III.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA.

[*After a pause.*]

Soph. And wherefore not ? When liberty is lost,
Let abject cowards live ; but in the brave
It were a treachery to themselves, enough
To merit chains. And is it fit for me,
Who in my veins, from *Asdrubal* deriv'd,
Hold *Carthaginian* enmity to *Rome* ;
Who sold my joyless youth to *Syphax*' arms,
For her destruction ; is it fit for me
To sit in feeble grief, and trembling wait
Th' approaching victor's rage ? reserv'd in chains
To grace his triumph, and become the scorn
Of every *Roman* dame—Gods ! how my soul
Disdains the thought ! This, this shall set it free.

[*Offers to stab herself.*]

Phæn.

Phæn. Hold, *Sophonisba*, hold! my friend! my queen!

For whom alone I live! hold your rash hand,
Nor thro' your guardian bosom stab your country.
This is our last resort, and always sure.
The gracious gods are liberal of death;
To that last blessing lend a thousand ways.
Think not I'd have you live to drag a chain,
And walk the triumph of insulting *Rome*.
No, by these tears of loyalty and love!
Ere I beheld so vile a sight, this hand
Should urge the faithful poignard to your heart,
And glory in the deed. But while hope lives,
Let not the generous die. 'Tis late before
The brave despair.

Soph. Thou copy of my soul!
And now my friend indeed! Shew me but hope,
One glimpse of hope, and I'll renew my toils,
Call patience, labour, fortitude again,
The vex'd unjoyous day, and sleepless night;
Nor shrink at danger, any shape of death,
Shew me the smallest hope! Alas, *Phænissa*,
Too fondly confident! Hope lives not here,
Fled with her sister Liberty beyond
The *Garamantian* hills, to some steep wild,
Some undiscover'd country, where the foot
Of *Roman* cannot come.

Phæn. Yes, there she liv'd
With *Mafnissa* wounded and forlorn,
Amidst the serpent's hiss, and tiger's yell.—

Soph. Why nam'st thou him?

Phæn. Madam, in this forgive
My forward zeal; from him proceeds our hope.
He lov'd you once; nor is your form impair'd,

Time

Time has matur'd it into stronger charms :
 Ask his protection from the *Roman* power,
 You must prevail ; for *Sophonisba* sure
 From *Massinissa* cannot ask in vain.

Soph. Now, by the prompting genius of my
 country !

I thank thee for the thought. True, there is pain
 Ev'n in descending thus to beg protection
 From that degenerate youth. But oh ! for thee
 My sinking country, and again to gaul
 This hated *Rome*, what would I not endure ?
 It shall be done, *Phœnissa* ; tho' disgust
 Hold back my struggling heart, it shall be done.

But hark : they come ; in this disorder'd tumult
 It fits not *Sophonisba* to be seen.
 I'll wait a calmer hour.—Let us retire.

S C E N E IV.

MASSINISSA. SYPHAX *in Chains*, NARVA,
Guards, &c.

Soph. Is there no dungeon in this city, dark,
 As is my troubled soul ! That thus I am brought
 To my own palace, to those rooms of state,
 Wont in another manner to receive me,
 With other signs of royalty than these ?

(looking on his chains.)

Mass. I will not wound thee, nor insult thee,
Sypbax,

With a recital of thy tyrant crimes.
 A captive here I see thee, fall'n below
 My most revengeful wish ; and all the rage,
 The noble fury, that this morn inflam'd me,

Is sunk to soft compassion. In the field,
 The perilous front of war, there is the scene
 Of brave revenge; and I have fought thee there,
 Keen as the wounded lion seeks his foe.
 But when a broken enemy, disarm'd,
 And helpless lies; a falling sword, an eye
 With pity flowing, and an arm as weak
 As infant softness, then becomes the brave.
 Believe it, *Syphax*, my relenting soul
 Melts at thy fate.

Syph. This, this, is all I dread,
 All I detest, this intolerance refin'd,
 This affectation of superior goodness.
 Pitied by thee!—Is there a form of death,
 Of torture, and of infamy like that?
 Ye partial gods, to what have you debas'd me?
 I feel your worst; why should I fear you more?

Hear me, vain youth! take notice—I abhor
 Thy mercy, loath it.—Use me like a slave;
 As I would thee, (delicious thought!) wert thou
 Here crouching in my power.

Mas. Outrageous man!
 Thou canst not drive me, by thy bitterest rage,
 To an unmanly deed; not all thy wrongs
 Can force my patient soul to stain its virtue.

Syph. I cannot wrong thee. When we drive the
 spear
 Into the monster's heart, to crush the serpent;
 Can that be call'd a wrong? 'Tis self-defence.

Mas. I'm loth to hurt thee more.—The tyrant
 works
 Too fierce already in thy rankled breast.
 But since thou seem'st to rank me with thyself,
 With great destroyers, with perfidious kings,
 I must reply to thy licentious tongue,

Bid

Bid thee remember, whose accursed sword
 Began this work of death ; who broke the ties,
 The holy ties, attested by the gods,
 Which bind the nations in the bond of peace ;
 Who meanly took advantage of my youth,
 Unskill'd in arms, unsettled on my throne,
 And drove me to the desert, there to dwell
 With kinder monsters ; who my cities sack'd,
 My country pillag'd, and my subjects murder'd ;
 Who still pursued me with inveterate hate,
 When open force prov'd vain, with ruffian arts,
 The villain's dagger, base assassination.
 And for no reason all. Brute violence
 Alone thy plea.—What the least provocation,
 Say, canst thou but pretend ?

Soph. I needed none.

Nature has in my being sown the seeds
 Of enmity to thine.—Nay, mark me this ;
 Could'st thou restore me to my former state,
 Strike off these chains, give me my crown again ;
 Yet must I still, implacable to thee,
 Seek eagerly thy death, or die myself.
 Life cannot hold us both !—Unequal gods !
 Who love to disappoint mankind, and take
 All vengeance to yourselves, why to the point
 Of my long-flatter'd wishes did ye lift me ;
 Then sink me down so low ? Just as I aim'd
 The glorious stroke that was to make me happy,
 Why did you blast my strong-extended arm,
 But that to mock us is your cruel sport ?
 What else is human life ?

Maf. Thus always join'd
 With an inhuman heart, and brutal manners,
 Is irreligion to the ruling gods ;

Whose

Whose schemes our peevish ignorance arraigns,
 Our thoughtless pride.—Thy lost condition, *Syphax*,
 Is nothing to the tumult of thy breast.
 There lies the sting of evil, there the drop
 That poisons nature.—Ye mysterious powers!
 Whose ways are ever-gracious, ever-just,
 As ye think wisest, best, dispose of me;
 But, whether thro' your gloomy depths I wander,
 Or on your mountains walk; give me the calm,
 The steady, smiling soul; where wisdom sheds
 Eternal sunshine and eternal peace!
 Then, if Misfortune comes, she brings along
 The bravest virtues. And so many great
 Illustrious spirits have convers'd with woe,
 Have in her school been taught, as are enough
 To consecrate distress, and make Ambition
 Ev'n with the Frown beyond the Smile of Fortune.

Syph. Torture and racks! This is the common trick
 Of insolent success, unsuffering pride.
 This prate of patience, and I know not what.
 'Tis all a lie, impracticable rant;
 And only tends to make me scorn thee more.

But why this talk? In mercy send me hence;
 Yet—ere I go—Oh, save me from distraction!
 I know, hot youth, thou burnest for my queen;
 But, by the majesty of ruin'd kings,
 And that commanding glory which surrounds her,
 I charge thee touch her not!

Mas. No, *Syphax*, no.

Thou need'st not charge me. That were mean indeed,
 A triumph that to thee. But could I stoop
 Again to love her; Thou, what right hast thou,
 A captive, to her bed? Thy bonds divorce
 And free her from thy power. All laws in this,
Roman and *Carthaginian*, all agree.

Syph.

Syph. Here, here, begins the bitterness of ruin,
Here my chains grind me first!

Mas. Po r *Sophonisba*!

She too becomes the prize of conquering *Rome*;
What most her heart abhors. Alas, how hard
Will slavery fit on her exalted soul!
She never will endure it, she will die.
For not a *Roman* burns with nobler ardor,
A higher sense of liberty than she;
And tho' she marry'd thee, her only stain,
False to my youth, and faithless to her vows;
Yet, I must own it, from a worthy cause,
From public spirit, did her fault proceed.

Syph. Must I then hear her praise from thee?
Confusion!

Oh! for a lonely dungeon! where I rather
Would talk with my own groans, and breathe revenge,
Than in the mansions of the bless'd with thee.
Hell! Whither must I go?

Mas. Unhappy man!

And is thy breast determin'd against peace,
On comfort shut?

Syph. On all, but death, from thee.

Mas. *Narva*, be *Syphax* thy peculiar care;
And use him well with tenderness and honour.
This evening *Laelius*, and to-morrow *Scipio*,
To *Cirta* comes. Then let the *Romans* take
Their prisoner.

Syph. There shines a gleam of hope
Across the gloom—From thee deliver'd!—Ease
Breathes in that thought—Lead on—My heart grows
lighter!

SCENE

SCENE V.

Maf. What dreadful havock in the human breast
The passions make, when, unconfin'd and mad!
They burst unguided by the mental eye,
The light of reason, which in various ways
Points them to good, or turns them back from ill!

O save me from the tumult of the soul!
From the wild beasts within!—For circling sands,
When the swift whirlwind whelms them o'er the lands;
The roaring deeps that to the clouds arise,
While through the storm the darting lightning flies;
The monster-brood to which this land gives birth,
The blazing city, and the gaping earth;
All deaths, all tortures, in one pang combin'd,
Are gentle to the tempest of the mind.

The End of the first Act.

ACT II. SCENE I.

MASINISSA, NARVA.

Maf. **T**HOU good old man, by whom my
youth was form'd,
The firm companion of my various life,
I own, 'tis true, that *Sophonisba's* image
Lives in my bosom still; and at each glance
I take in secret of the bright idea,
A strange disorder seizes on my soul,

Which

Which burns with stronger glory. Need I say,
 How once she had my vows? Till *Scipio* came,
 Resistless man! like a descending God,
 And snatch'd me from the *Carthaginian* side
 To nobler *Rome*; beneath whose laurel'd brow,
 And fav'ring eye, the nations grow polite,
 Humane, and happy. Then thou may'st remember,
 Such is this woman's high impetuous spirit,
 That all-controlling love she bears her country,
 Her *Carthage*; that for this she sacrific'd
 To *Syphax*. unbelov'd, her blooming years,
 And won him off from *Rome*.

Nar. My generous prince!
 Applauding *Afric* of thy choice approves.
 Fame claps her wings, and Virtue smiles on thee,
 Of peace thou soft'ner, and thou soul of war!
 But, oh, beware of that fair foe to glory,
 Woman! and most of *Carthaginian* woman!
 Who has not heard of fatal *Punic* guile?
 Of their stol'n conquests? their insidious leagues?
 Their *Asdrubals*? their *Hannibals*? with all
 Their wily heroes? And, if such their men,
 What must their women be?

Maf. You make me smile.
 I thank thy honest zeal. But never dread
 The firmness of my heart, the strong attachment,
 I hold to *Rome*, to *Scipio*, and to Glory.
 Indeed, I cannot, would not quite forget
 The grace of *Sophonisba*; how she look'd,
 And talk'd, and mov'd, a *Pallas*, or a *Juno*?
 Accomplish'd ev'n in trifles, when she stoop'd
 From higher thoughts, and with a soften'd eye
 Gave her quick spirit into gayer life.
 Then every word was liveliness, and wit;

We

We heard the Muses' song; and the dance swam
Thro' all the maze of harmony. Believe me
I do not flatter; yet my panting soul
To *Scipio's* friendship, to the fair pursuit
Of fame, and for my people's happiness,
Resign'd this *Sophonisba*; and tho' now
Constrain'd by sweet necessity to see her,
A captive in my power, yet will I still
Resign her.

Nar. I'll not doubt thy fortitude,
My *Masiniſſa*, thy exalted purpose
Not to be lost in love; but ah! we know not,
Oft, till experience sighs it to the soul,
The boundless witchcraft of ensnaring woman,
And our own slippery hearts. From *Scipio* learn
The temperance of heroes. I'll recount
Th' instructive story, what these eyes beheld;
Perhaps you've heard it; but 'tis pleasing still,
Tho' told a thousand times.

Mas. I burn to hear it.
Lost by my late misfortunes in the desert,
I liv'd a stranger to the voice of Fame,
To *Scipio's* last exploits. Indulge me now.
Great actions, ev'n recounted, raise the mind:
But when a friend has done them, then, my *Narva*,
They doubly charm us; then with more than wonder,
Ev'n with a sort of vanity we listen.

Nar. When to his glorious, first essay in war,
New *Carthage* fell; there all the flower of *Spain*
Were kept in hostage; a full field presenting
For *Scipio's* generosity to shine.

And then it was, that when the hero heard
How I to thee belong'd, he with large gifts
And friendly words dismiss'd me.

Mas. I remember.

And in his favour That engag'd me first.
But to thy story.

Nar. What with admiration
Struck every heart was this—A noble virgin,
Conspicuous far o'er all the captive dames,
Was mark'd the general's prize. She wept, and
blush'd,
Young, fresh, and blooming like the morn. An eye,
As when the blue sky trembles through a cloud
Of purest white. A secret charm combin'd
Her features, and infus'd enchantment thro' them.
Her shape was harmony.—But eloquence
Beneath her beauty fails: which seem'd on purpose,
By Nature lavish'd on her, that mankind
Might see the virtue of a hero tried
Almost beyond the stretch of human force.
Soft as she pass'd along, with downcast eyes,
Where gentle sorrow swell'd, and now and then
Dropt o'er her modest cheek a trickling tear,
The *Roman* legions languish'd; and hard war
Felt more than pity. Ev'n their chief himself,
As on his high tribunal rais'd he sat,
Turn'd from the dangerous fight, and chiding ask'd
His officers, if by this gift they meant
To cloud his glory in its very dawn.

Mas. Oh Gods! my fluttering heart! Oh, stop not,
Narva.

Nar. She, question'd of her birth, in trembling
accents,
With tears and blushes broken, told her tale,
But when he found her royally descended,
Of her old captive parents the sole joy;
And that a hapless *Celtiberian* prince,

Her

Her lover and belov'd, forgot his chains,
 His lost dominions, and for her alone
 Wept out his tender soul; sudden the heart
 Of this young, conquering, loving, godlike *Roman*,
 Felt all the great divinity of virtue.
 His wishing youth stood check'd, his tempting power,
 Restrain'd by kind humanity.—At once
 He for her parents and her lover call'd.
 The various scene imagine: how his troops
 Look'd dubious on, and wonder'd what he meant;
 While stretch'd below the trembling suppliants lay,
 Rack'd by a thousand mingling passions, fear,
 Hope, jealousy, disdain, submission, grief,
 Anxiety, and love in every shape.
 To these as different sentiments succeeded,
 As mixt emotions, when the man divine
 Thus the dread silence to the lover broke.

“ We both are young, both charm'd. The right
 “ of war

“ Has put thy beauteous mistress in my power:
 “ With whom I could in the most sacred ties
 “ Live out a happy life: but know that *Romans*
 “ Their hearts as well as enemies can conquer.
 “ Then take her to thy soul; and with her take
 “ Thy liberty and kingdom. In return
 “ I ask but this. When you behold these eyes,
 “ These charms, with transport, be a friend to *Rome*.”

Maf. There spoke the soul of *Scipio*—But the
 Lovers?

Nar. Joy and ecstasie wonder held them mute;
 While the loud camp, and all the clust'ring crowd,
 That hung around, rang with repeated shouts.
 Fame took th' alarm, and thro' resounding *Spain*
 Blew fast the fair report; which, more than arms,
 Admiring nations to the *Romans* gain'd.

Mas. My friend in glory! thy awaken'd prince
 Springs at thy noble tale. It fires my soul,
 And nerves each thought anew; apt oft perhaps,
 Too much, too much, to slacken into love.
 But now the soft oppression flies; and all
 My mounting powers expand to deeds like these.
 Who, who would live, my *Narva*, just to breathe
 This idle air, and indolently run,
 Day after day, the still-returning round
 Of life's mean offices, and sickly joys;
 But, in the service of mankind, to be
 A guardian god below—Still to employ
 The mind's brave ardour in heroic aims,
 Such as may raise us o'er the groveling herd,
 And make us shine for ever, That is life.
 Bleed every vein about me; every nerve
 With anguish tremble; every sinew ake;
 The third time may I lose my crown; again
 Wander the false inhospitable Syrts;
 If, to reward my toils, the gods will grant me
 To share the wreath of fame on *Scipio's* brow.

But see, she comes, the beauteous *Sophonisba*!
 Behold, my friend, mark her majestic port!

S C E N E II.

MASINISSA, SOPHONISEA, NARVA, PHOENISSA.

Soph. Behold; victorious prince! the scene revers'd;
 And *Sophonisba* kneeling here; a captive,
 O'er whom the Gods, thy fortune, and thy virtue,
 Give thee unquestion'd power of life and death.
 If such a one may raise her suppliant voice,

Once

Once music to thy ear ; if she may touch
 Thy knee, thy purple, and thy victor-hand ;
 Oh, listen, *Masiniſſa* ! let thy ſoul
 Intenſely liſten ! while I fervent pray,
 And ſtrong adjure thee, by that regal ſtate,
 In which with equal pomp we lately ſhone ;
 By the *Numidian* name, our common boaſt,
 And by thoſe household gods ; who may, I wiſh,
 With better omens take thee to this palace,
 Than *Syphax* hence they ſent. As is thy pleaſure,
 In all beſide determine of my fate.

This, this alone I beg. Never, oh never !
 Into the cruel, proud, and hated power
 Of *Romans* let me fall. Since angry Heaven
 Will have it ſo, that I muſt be a ſlave,
 And that a galling chain muſt bind theſe hands,
 It were ſome little ſoft'ning in my doom,
 To call a kindred ſon of the ſame clime,
 A native of *Numidia*, my lord.

But if thou canſt not ſave me from the *Romans*,
 If this ſad favour be beyond thy power ;
 At leaſt to give me death is what thou canſt.
 Here ſtrike—my naked boſom courts thy ſword ;
 And my laſt breath ſhall bleſs thee, *Masiniſſa* !

Maf. Riſe, *Sophonisba*, riſe. To ſee thee thus
 Is a revenge I ſcorn ; and all the man
 Within me, though much injur'd by thy pride,
 And ſpirit too tempeſtuous for thy ſex,
 Yet bluſhes to behold thus at my feet,
 Thus proſtrate low, her for whom kings have kneel'd,
 The faireſt, but the falſeſt of her ſex.

Soph. Spare thy reproach.—'Tis cruel thus to loſe
 In rankling diſcord, and ungenerous ſtrife,
 The few remaining moments that divide me

From the most loath'd of evils, *Roman* bondage !
 Yes, shut thy heart 'gainst me; shut thy heart
 Against compassion, every human thought,
 Ev'n recollected love: yet know, rash youth !
 That when thou seest me swell their lofty triumph,
 Thou seest thyself in me. This is my day;
 To-morrow will be thine. But here, be sure,
 Here will I lie on this vile earth, forlorn,
 Of hope abandon'd, since despis'd by thee;
 These locks all loose and fordid in the dust;
 This sullied bosom growing to the ground,
 Till the remorseless soldier comes, more fierce
 From recent blood, and in thy very eye,
 Lays raging his rude sanguinary grasp
 On these weak limbs; and tortures them with chains.
 Then if no friendly steel, no nectar'd draught
 Of deadly poison, can enlarge my soul;
 It will indignant burst from a slave's body;
 And, join'd to mighty *Dido*, scorn you all.

Maf. Oh *Sophonisba* ! 'tis not safe to hear thee;
 And I mistook my heart, to trust it thus.
 Hence let me fly.

Soph. You shall not, *Mafinissa* !
 Here will I hold you, tremble here for ever;
 Here unremitting grow, till you consent.
 And canst thou think, oh ! canst thou think to leave me,
 Expos'd, defenceless, wretched, here alone,
 A prey to *Romans* flush'd with blood and conquest,
 The subject of their scorn or baser love ?
 Sure *Mafinissa* cannot; and though chang'd,
 Though cold as that averted look he wears;
 Sure love can ne'er in generous breasts be lost
 To that degree, as not from shame and outrage
 To save what once they lov'd.

Maf.

Mas. Enchantment! Madness!
What would'st thou, *Sophonisba*?—Oh my heart!
My treacherous heart!

Soph. What would I, *Masiniſſa*?
My mean request sits blushing on my cheek.
To be thy slave, young prince, is what I beg;
Here *Sophonisba* kneels to be thy slave;
Yet kneels in vain. But thou'rt a slave thyself,
And canst not from the *Romans* save one woman;
Her, who was once the triumph of thy soul,
Ere they seduc'd it by their lying glory.
Immortal Gods! and am I fall'n so low?
Scorn'd by a lover? by the man whom once
My heart, alas! too much inclin'd to love,
Before he sunk into the slave of *Rome*?
Nought can be worth this baseness, life, nor empire!
I loath me for it—On this kinder earth,
Then leave me, leave me, to despair and death!

Mas. I cannot bear her tears.—Rise, quickly rise,
In all the conquering majesty of charms,
O *Sophonisba*, rise! while here I swear,
By the tremendous powers that rule mankind!
By heaven and earth, and hell! by love and glory!
The *Romans* shall not hurt you—*Romans* cannot;
For *Rome* is generous as the gods themselves,
And honours, not insults, a generous foe.
Yet, since you dread them, take this royal hand,
The pledge of surety, by which kings are bound;
By which I hold you mine, and vow to treat you
With all the softness of remember'd love,
All that can sooth thy fate, and make thee happy.

Soph. I thank thee, *Masiniſſa*! now the same,
The same bright youth, exalted, full of soul,
With whom in happier days I us'd to pass
The tender hour; while dawning fair in love,

All song and sweetness, life set joyous out ;
 Ere the black tempest of ambition rose,
 And drove us different ways.—Thus dress'd in war,
 In nodding plumes, o'ercast with sullen thought,
 With purpos'd vengeance dark, I knew thee not ;
 But now breaks out the beauteous sun anew ;
 The gay *Numidian* shines ; who warm'd me once,
 Whose love was glory.—Vain ideas, hence !
 —Long since, my heart, to nobler passions known,
 Has your acquaintance scorn'd.

Mas. Oh ! while you talk,
 Enchanting fair-one ! my deluded thought
 Runs back to days of love ; when fancy still
 Found worlds of beauty ever rising new
 To the transported eye ; when flattering hope
 Form'd endless prospects of increasing bliss ;
 And still the credulous heart believ'd them all,
 Ev'n more than love could promise.—But the scene
 Is full of danger for a youthful eye ;
 I must not, dare not, will not look that way.
 O hide it, wisdom, glory, from my view !
 Or in sweet ruin I shall sink again.

Distemper clouds thy cheek ; thy colour goes.
 Retire, and from the troubles of the day
 Repose thy weary soul, worn out with care,
 And rough unhappy thought.

Soph. May *Masiniſſa*
 Ne'er want the goodness he has shewn to me !

S C E N E

SCENE III.

MASINISSA, NARVA.

Mas. The danger's o'er, I've heard the *Siren's* song,
 Yet still to virtue hold my steady course.
 I mark'd thy kind concern, thy friendly fears,
 And own them just; for she has beauty, *Narva*.
 So full, so perfect, with so great a soul
 Inform'd, so rais'd with animating spirit,
 As strikes like lightning from the hand of *Jove*,
 And raises love to glory.

Nar. Ah. my Prince!

Too true, it is too true; her fatal charms
 Are powerful, and to *Masinissa's* heart
 Know but too well the way. And art thou sure,
 That the soft poison, which within thy veins
 Lay unextinguish'd, is not rous'd anew,
 Is not this moment working through thy soul?
 Dost thou not love? Confess.

Mas. What said my friend
 Of poison? love? of loving *Sophonisba*?
 Yes, I admire her, wonder at her beauty,
 And he who does not is as dull as earth,
 The cold unanimated form of man,
 Ere lighted up with the celestial fire.
 Where-e'er she goes, still admiration gazes,
 And listens while she talks. Ev'n thou thyself,
 Who saw'st her with the malice of a friend,
 Ev'n thou thyself admir'st her.—Dost thou not?
 Say, speak sincerely.

Nar. She has charms indeed;
 But has she charms like virtue? Tho' majestic,

C 4

Does

Does she command us with a force like glory?

Maf. All glory's in her eye! Perfection thence
Looks from its throne; and on her ample brow
Sits majesty; her features glow with life,
Warm with heroic soul. Her mien! she walks,
As when a tow'ring goddess treads this earth.
But when her language flows; when such a mind
Descends to sooth, to sigh, to weep, to grasp
The tottering knee; oh! *Narva, Narva*, oh!
Expression here is dumb.

Nar. Alas! my Lord,
Is this the talk of sober admiration?
Are these the sallies of a heart at ease?
Of *Scipio's* friend? Is this thy steady virtue?

Maf. I tell thee once again, too cautious man,
That when a woman begs, a matchless woman,
A woman once lov'd, a fallen queen,
A *Sophonisba*! when she twines her charms
Around our soul, and all her power of looks,
Of tears, of sighs, of softness, plays upon us;
He's more or less than man who can resist her.
For me, my steadfast soul approves, nay more,
Exults in the protection it has promis'd.
And nought, tho' plighted honour did not bind me,
Should shake the virtuous purpose of my heart;
Nought, by th' avenging gods! who heard my vow,
And hear me now again.

Nar. And was it then
For this you conquer'd?

Maf. Yes, and triumph in it.
This was my fondest wish; the very point,
The plume of glory, the delicious prize
Of bleeding years. I must have been a brute,
A greater monster than *Numidia* breeds,
A horror to myself; if on the ground,

Cast

Cast vilely from me, I th' illustrious fair
 Had left to bondage, bitterness, and death.
 Nor is there aught in war worth what I feel ;
 In pomp and hollow state, like the sweet sense
 Of infelt bliss, which the reflection gives me,
 Of saving thus such excellence and beauty
 From what her generous soul abhors the most.

Nar. My friend ! my royal lord ! alas ! you slide,
 You sink from virtue. On the giddy brink
 Of fate you stand.—One step, and all is lost !

Mas. No more, no more ! if this is being lost,
 And rushing down the precipice of fate ;
 Then down I go, far, far beyond the reach
 Of scrupulous dull precaution.—Leave me, *Narva*,
 I want to be alone, to find some shade,
 Some solitary gloom ; there to shake off
 These harsh tumultuous cares that vex my life,
 This sick ambition on itself recoiling ;
 And there to listen to the gentle voice,
 The sigh of peace, something, I know not what,
 That whispers transport to my heart.—Farewell.

S C E N E IV.

NARVA, alone.

Struck, and he knows it not.—So when the field,
 Elate in heart, the warrior scorns to yield ;
 The streaming blood can scarce convince his eyes ;
 Nor will he feel the wound by which he dies.

The End of the Second Act.

C 5.

A C T

A C T III. S C E N E I.MASINISSA *alone.*

I N vain I wander through the shade for peace ;
'Tis with the calm alone, the pure of heart,
That there the goddess talks—But in my breast
Some busy thought, some secret eating pang,
Still restless throbs, on *Sophonisba* still
Earnest, intent, devoted all to her.
What may this mean ? 'Tis Love, almighty Love !
Returning on me with a stronger tide.
Come to my breast, thou rosy-smiling god !
Come unconfin'd ! bring all thy joys along,
All thy soft cares, and mix them copious here.
Quick, let me fly to her ; and there forget
This tedious absence, war, ambition, noise,
Friendship itself, the vanity of fame,
And all but love, for love is more than all.

S C E N E II.

MASINISSA, NARVA.

Mas. Welcome again, my friend—Come nearer,
Narva ;
Lend methine arm, and I will tell thee all,
Unfold my secret heart, whose every pulse

With

With *Sophonisba* bears.—Nay, hear me out—
 Swift, as I mus'd, the conflagration spread,
 At once too strong, too general, to be quench'd.
 I love, and I approve it, doat upon her,
 Ev'n think these minutes lost I talk with thee.
 Heavens! what emotions have possess'd my soul!
 Snatch'd by a moment into years of passion.

Nar. Ah, *Masiniissa*!—

Mas. Argue not against me.

Talk down the circling winds that lift the desert;
 And when by lightning fir'd the forests blaze,
 Talk down the flame, but not my stronger love.
 I have for love a thousand thousand reasons,
 Dear to the heart, and potent o'er the soul.
 My ev'ry thought, reflection, mem'ry, all
 Are a perpetual spring of tenderness;
 Oh, *Sophonisba*! I am wholly thine.

Nar. Is this deceitful day then come to nought,
 This day, that set thee on a double throne?
 That gave thee *Syphax* chain'd, thy deadly foe?
 With perfect conquest crown'd thee, perfect glory?
 Is it so soon eclips'd? and does yon sun,
 Yon setting sun, who this fair morning saw thee
 Ride through the ranks of long-extended war,
 As radiant as himself; and when the storm
 Began, beheld thee tread the rising surge
 Of battle high, and drive it on the foe;
 Does he now, blushing, see thee sunk so weak?
 Caught in a smile? the captive of a look?
 I cannot name it without tears.

Mas. Away!

I'm sick of war, of the destroying trade,
 Smooth'd o'er, and gilded with the name of glory,
 In vain you spread the martial field to me.

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 Caught in a smile? the captive of a look?
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I'm sick of war, of the destroying trade,
 Smooth'd o'er, and gilded with the name of glory,
 In vain you spread the martial field to me.

My happier eyes are turn'd another way,
Behold it not; or, if they do behold it,
Shrunk up, far off, a visionary scene;
As to the waking man appears the dream.

Nar. Or rather as realities appear,
The virtue, pomp, and dignities of life,
In sick disorder'd dreams.

Maf. Think not I scorn
The task of heroes, when oppression rages,
And lawless violence confounds the world.
Who would not bleed with transport for his country,
Tear every tender passion from his heart,
And greatly die to make a people happy,
Ought not to taste of happiness himself,
And is low-soul'd indeed—But sure, my friend,
There is a time for love; or life were vile,
A tedious circle of unjoyous days
With senseless hurry fill'd, distasteful, wretched,
Till love comes smiling in, and brings his sweets,
His healing sweets, soft cares, transporting joys,
That make the poor account of life compleat,
And justify the Gods.

Nar. Mistaken Prince,
I blame not love. But——

Maf. Slander not my passion.
I've suffer'd thee too far.—Take heed, old man.—
Love will not bear an accusation, *Narva*.

Nar. I'll speak the truth, when truth and friend-
ship call,
Nor fear thy frown unkind.—Thou hast no right
To *Sophonisba*; she belongs to *Rome*.

Maf. Ha! she belongs to *Rome*!—'Tis true—My
thoughts,
Where have you wander'd, not to think of this?
Think ere I promis'd? ere I lov'd?—Confusion?
I know

I know not what to say—I should have lov'd,
 Tho' *Jove* in muttering thunder had forbid it.
 But *Rome* will not refuse so small a boon,
 Whose gifts are kingdoms: *Rome* must grant it sure,
 One captive to my wish, one poor request.
 So small to them, but oh so dear to me!
 In this my heart confides.

Nar. Delusive love!

Thro' what wild projects is the frantic mind
 Beguil'd by thee?—And think'st thou that the
Romans,

The senators of *Rome*, these gods on earth,
 Wise, steady to the right, severely just,
 All uncorrupt, and like eternal Fate,
 Not to be mov'd, will listen to the sigh
 Of idle love? They who, when Virtue calls,
 Will not the voice itself of Nature hear,
 But bid their children bleed before their eyes;
 Will they regard the light fantastick pangs
 Of a fond heart? and with thy kingdom give thee
 Their most inveterate foe, from their firm side,
 Like *Syphax*, to delude thee? and the point
 Of their own bounty on themselves to turn?
 Thou canst not hope it sure.—Impossible!

Maf. What shall I do? be now the friend exerted.
 For love and honour press me; love and honour,
 All that is dear and excellent in life,
 All that or soothes the man or lifts the hero,
 Engage my soul.

Nar. Rash was your vow, my lord.
 I know not what to counsel —When you vow'd,
 You vow'd what was not in your power to grant;
 And therefore 'tis not binding.

Maf.

Maf. Never! never!

Oh never will I falsify that vow!
Ere then destruction seize me! Yes, ye *Romans*,
If it be so, there, take your kingdoms back,
Your friendship, your esteem, all, all but her.

Hold—Let me think a while—It shall be so!
By all th' inspiring gods that prompt my thought;
This very night shall solemnize our vows;
And the next joyous sun, that visits *Afric*,
See *Sophonisba* seated on my throne.—
Then must they spare my queen.—They will not,
surely,

They will not dare to force my consort from me.

Nar. And is it possible, ye gods that rule us!
Can *Masiniissa* in his pride of youth,
In his meridian glory shining wide,
The light of *Afric*, can the friend of *Scipio*
Take a false woman to his nuptial bed,
Who scorn'd him for a tyrant old and cruel,
His rancorous foe? and gave her untouch'd bloom,
Her spring of charms to *Syphax*?

Maf. Curs'd remembrance!

This, this, has thrown a serpent to my heart;
While it o'erflow'd with tenderness, with joy,
With all the sweetness of exulting love.
Now nought but gall is there, and burning poison.
Yes, it was so!—Curse on her vain ambition!
What had her meddling sex to do with states?
Forsook for him, just gods! for hateful *Syphax*,
My tender, faithful love for his gross passion!
The thought is hell!—Oh, I had treasur'd up
A world of indignation, years of scorn;
But her sad suppliant witchcraft sooth'd it down.

Where

Where is she now, that it may burst upon her?
Haste, bring her to me; tho' my plighted faith
Shall save her from the *Romans*, yet I'll tell her,
'That I will never, never see her more!
Ha! there she comes.—Pernicious fair-one!—Leave
me.

SCENE III.

SOPHONISBA, MASINISSA.

Soph. Forgive this quick return.—The rage, confusion,

And mingled passions of this luckless day,
Made me forget another warm request
I had to beg of generous *Masinissa*;
For oh to whom, save to the generous, can
The miserable fly?—But much disturb'd
You look, and scowl upon me a denial.
Repentance frowns on your contracted brow.
Already weary of my sinking fate,
You seem to droop; and for unhappy *Syphax*
I shall implore in vain.

Mas. For *Syphax*, vengeance!
And canst thou mention him? Oh, grant me breath!

Soph. I know, young prince, how deep he has
provok'd thee;
How keen he sought thy youth; thro' what a fire
Of great distress, from which you come the brighter.
On mere indifferent objects, common bounty
Will shower relief; but when our bitterest foe
Lies sunk, disarm'd, and desolate, then! then!
To feel the mercies of a pitying God,

To

To raise him from the dust, and that best way
 To triumph o'er him, is heroic goodness.
 Oh let unhappy *Syphax* touch thy heart,
 Victorious *Masiniſſa*!

Maf. Monstrous this!

Still dost thou blast me with that cursed name!
 The very name thy conscious guilt should shun.

Had he but driven me from my native throne,
 From regal pomp and luxury, to dwell
 Among the forest beasts; to bear the beam
 Of red *Numidian* suns, and the dank dew
 Of cold unshelter'd nights; to mix with wolves,
 To hunt with hungry tigers for my prey,
 And thirst with *Dipsads* on the burning sand;
 I could have thank'd him for his angry lesson;
 The fair occasion that his rage afforded
 Of learning patience, fortitude, and hope,
 Still rising stronger on incumbent fate.
 But there is one unpardonable outrage,
 That scorches up the tear in Pity's eye,
 And ev'n sweet Mercy's self converts to gall.
 I cannot—will not name it—Down my heart,
 My swelling heart!

Soph. Ah! whence this sudden storm,
 That hurries all thy soul?

Maf. And dost thou ask?

Ask thy own faithless heart, snatch'd from my vows,
 From the warm wishes of my springing youth,
 And given to that old hated monster, *Syphax*.
 Perfidious *Sophonisba*!

Soph. Nay, no more.

With too much truth I can return the charge.
 Why didst thou drive me to that cruel choice?
 Why leave me, with my country, to destruction?

Why

Why break thy love, thy faith, and join the *Romans*?

Maf. By Heavens! the *Romans* were my better
genius,

Sav'd me from shame, and form'd my youth to glory;

But for the *Romans* I had been a savage,

A wretch like *Syphax*, a forgotten thing,

The tool of *Carthage*.

Soph. Meddle not with *Carthage*,

Impatient youth; for that I will not bear;

Tho' I am here thy slave, I will not bear it.

Not one base word of *Carthage*—on thy soul!

Maf. How vain thy phrenzy! Go, command thy
slaves,

Thy fools, thy *Syphaxes*; but I will speak,

Speak loud of *Carthage*, call it false, ungenerous;

The *Romans* are the light, the glory—

Soph. *Romans*!

Perdition on the *Romans*!—on their friends,

On all but thee.—The *Romans* are the scourge

Of the vex'd world, destroyers of mankind,

And all beneath the smooth dissembling mask

Of justice, and compassion; as if slave

Was but another name for civiliz'd.

Against her tyrant power, each generous sword

Of every nation should be drawn—While *Carthage*

Unblemish'd rises on the base of commerce,

Founds her fair empire on that common good,

And asks of Heaven nought but the winds and tides

To carry plenty, letters, science, wealth,

Civility, and grandeur, round the world.

Maf. No more compare them! for the gods them-
selves

Declare for *Rome*.

Soph.

Soph. It was not always so.
 The gods declar'd for *Hannibal*; when *Italy*
 Blaz'd all around him, all her streams ran blood;
 And when at *Trebia*, *Thrasymene*, and *Cannæ*,
 The *Carthaginian* sword with *Roman* blood
 Was drunk—Oh, that he then, on that dread day,
 While lifeless consternation blacken'd *Rome*,
 Had raz'd th' accursed city to the ground,
 And sav'd the world!—When will it come again,
 A day so glorious, and so big with vengeance
 On those my soul abhors?

Mas. Avert it Heaven!
 The *Romans* not enslave, but save the world
 From *Carthaginian* rage—

Soph. I'll bear no more!
 Nor tenderness, nor life, nor liberty,
 Nothing shall make me bear it.—Rather, rather,
 Detested as ye are, ye *Romans*, take me—
 Oh, pitying take me to your nobler chains,
 And save me from this abject youth, your slave!
 —How canst thou kill me thus?—

Mas. I meant it not.
 I only meant to tell thee, haughty fair-one!
 How this alone might bind me to the *Romans*;
 That, in a frail and sliding hour, they snatch'd me
 From the perdition of thy love, which fell,
 Like baleful lightning, where I most could wish,
 And prov'd destruction to my mortal foe.
 Oh pleasing! fortunate!

Soph. I thank them too.
 By Heavens! for once, I love them; since they turn'd
 My better thoughts from thee. Thou—But I will not
 Give thee the name thy mean servility
 From my just scorn deserves.

Mas.

Mas. Oh, freely call me

By every name thy fury can inspire;
 Delight me with thy hate—I love no more—
 It will not hurt me, *Sophonisba*.—Love,
 Long since I gave it to the passing winds,
 And would not be a lover for the world.
 A lover is the very fool of Nature,
 Made sick by his own wantonness of thought;
 His fever'd fancy: while, to your own charms,
 Imputing all, you swell with boundless pride.
 Shame on the wretch! he should be driven from men,
 To live with *Asian* slaves, in one soft herd,
 All worthless, all ridiculous together.

For me, this moment, here I mean to bid
 Farewell, a glad farewell to love and thee.

Soph. With all my soul, farewell!—Yet ere you go;
 Know that my spirit burns as high as thine,
 As high to glory, and as low to love.

Thy promises are void; and I absolve thee,
 Here in the presence of the list'ning gods.—
 Take thy repented vows—To proud *Cornelia*
 I'd rather be a slave, to *Scipio's* mother,
 Than queen of all *Numidia*, by the favour
 Of him, who dares insult the helpless thus.

[*Pausing.*]

Still dost thou stay? behold me then again,
 Hopeless and wild, a lost, abandon'd slave.
 And now thy brutal purpose must be gain'd.
 Away, thou cruel, and ungenerous, go!

Mas. No, not for worlds would I resume my vow!
 Dishonour blast me then! all kind of ills
 Fill up my cup of bitterness, and shame!
 When I resign thee to triumphant *Rome*.

Oh,

Oh, lean not thus dejected to the ground !
The fight is misery.—What roots me here ?

[*Aside.*

Alas ! I have urg'd my foolish heart too far ;
And love depress'd recoils with greater force.
Oh, *Sophonisba* !

Soph. By thy pride she dies.
Inhuman prince !

Mas. Thine is the triumph, Love !
By heaven and earth ! I cannot hold it more.
Wretch that I was, to crush th' unhappy thus ;
The fairest too, the dearest of her sex !
For whom my soul could die !—Turn, quickly turn.
O *Sophonisba* ! my belov'd ! my glory !
Turn and forgive the violence of love,
Of love that knows no bounds !

Soph. And can it be ?
Can that soft passion prove so fierce of heart,
As on the tears of misery, the sighs
Of death, to feast ? to torture what it loves ?

Mas. Yes, it can be, thou goddess of my soul !
Whose each emotion is but varied love,
All over love, its powers, its passions, all :
Its anger, indignation, fury, love ;
Its pride, disdain, even detestation, love ;
And when it, wild, resolves to love no more,
Then is the triumph of excessive love.
Didst thou not mark me ? mark the dubious rage,
That tore my heart with anguish while I talk'd ?
Thou didst ; and must forgive so kind a fault.
What would thy trembling lips ?

Soph. Oh, let me die.
For such another storm, so much contempt
Thrown out on *Carthage*, so much praise on *Rome*,
Were

Were worse than death. Why should I longer tire
My weary fate? The most relentless *Romnn*
What could he more?

Maf. Oh, *Sophonisba*, hear;
See me thy suppliant now. Talk not of death.
I have no life but thee.—Alas! alas!
Hadst thou a little tenderness for me,
The smallest part of what I feel, thou would'st—
What would'st thou not forgive? But how indeed
How can I hope it? Yet I from this moment
Will so devote my being to thy pleasure,
So live alone to gain thee, that thou must,
If there is human nature in thy breast,
Feel some relenting warmth.

Soph. Well, well, 'tis past.
To be inexorable, suits not slaves.

Maf. Spare, spare that word; it stabs me to the
foul;

My crown, my life, and liberty, are thine.

Oh give my passion way! My heart is full,
Oppress'd by love; and I could number tears,
With all the dews that sprinkle o'er the morn;
Oh! thou hast melted down my stubborn soul
To female tenderness.—Enough, enough,
Have we been cheated by the trick of state,
For *Rome* and *Carthage* suffer'd much too long;
And, led by gaudy fancies, wander'd far,
Far from our bliss. But now since met again,
Since here I hold thee, circle all perfection,
In these bless'd arms; since Fate too presses hard,
Since *Rome* and slavery drive thee to the brink;
Let this immediate night exchange our vows,
Secure my bliss, our future fortunes blend,
Set thee, the queen of beauty, on my throne,

And

And on these lovely brows for empire form'd
Place *Affric's* noblest crown.—A wretched gift
To what my love would give!

Soph. What? marry thee?

This night?

Maf. Thou dear one! yes, this very night
Let injur'd *Hymen* have his rights restor'd,
And bind our broken vows.—Think, serious, think!
On what I plead. A thousand reasons urge.—
Captivity dissolves thy former marriage;
And, if the meanest vulgar thus are freed,
Can *Sophonisba* to a slave, to *Syphax*,
The most exalted of her sex, be bound?
Besides, it is the best, perhaps sole way,
To save thee from the *Romans*; and must sure
Bar their pretensions: or, if ruin comes,
To perish with thee is to perish happy.

Soph. Yet must I still insist——

Maf. It shall be so.

I know thy purpose; it would plead for *Syphax*.
He shall have all, thou dearest! shall have all,
Crowns, trifles, kingdoms, all again, but thee,
But thee, thou more than all!

Soph. (*Afide.*) Bear witness, Heaven;
This is alone for *Carthage*.

[*To him.*]

Gain'd by goodness,
I may be thine. Expect no love, no fighting.
Perhaps, hereafter, I may learn again
To hold thee dear. If on these terms thou canst,
Here take me, take me, to thy wishes.

Maf. Yes,

Yes, *Sophonisba*! as a wretch takes life

From

From off the rack.—All wild with frantic joy,
Thus hold thee, press thee, to my bounding heart;
And bless the bounteous Gods.—Can Heaven give
more?

Oh, happy! happy! happy!—Come, my fair,
This ready minute sees thy will perform'd;
From *Syphax* knocks his chains; and I myself,
Ev'n in his favour, will request the *Romans*.

Oh, thou hast smil'd my passions into peace!
So while conflicting winds embroil'd the seas,
In perfect bloom, warm with immortal blood,
Young *Venus* rear'd her o'er the raging flood;
She smil'd around, like thine her beauties glow'd;
When smooth, in gentle swells, the surges flow'd;
Sunk, by degrees, into a liquid plain;
And one bright calm sat trembling on the main.

The End of the Third Act.

A C T IV. S C E N E I.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA.

Phœn. **H**AILE, queen of *Masæsyia* once again
And fair *Massyia* join'd! This ris-
ing day
Saw *Sophonisba*, from the height of life,
Thrown to the very brink of slavery;
State, honours, armies vanish'd; nothing left

But her own great unconquerable mind.
And yet, ere evening comes, to larger power
Restor'd I see my royal friend, and kneel
In grateful homage to the Gods and her.

Ye Powers, what awful changes often mark
The fortunes of the great !

Soph. Phœnissa, true ;

'Tis awful all, the wondrous work of Fate.
But, ah, this sudden marriage damps my soul !
I like it not, that wild precipitance
Of youth, that ardour, that impetuous stream
In which his love return'd. At first, my friend,
He vainly rag'd with disappointed love ;
And, as the hasty storm subsided, then
To softness varied, to returning fondness,
To sighs, to tears, to supplicating vows ;
But all his vows were idle, till at last
He shook my heart by *Rome*.—To be his queen,
Could only save me from their horrid power.
And there is madness in that thought, enough
In that strong thought alone to make me run
From nature.

Phæn. Was it not auspicious, Madam ?

Just as we hop'd ? just as our wishes plann'd ?
Nor let your spirit sink. Your serious hours,
When you behold the *Roman* ravage check'd,
From their enchantment *Masiniſſa* freed,
And *Carthage* mistress of the world again,
This marriage will approve : then will it rise
In all its glory, virtuous, wise, and great,
While happy nations, then deliver'd, join
Their loud acclaim. And, had the bless'd occasion
Neglected flown, where now had been your hopes ?

Your

Your liberty ? your country ? where your all ?
Think well of this ; you cannot but exult
In what is done.

Soph. So may my hopes succeed,
As love alone to *Carthage*, to the public,
Led me a marriage victim to the temple,
And justifies my vows !—Ha ! *Syphax* here !
What would his rage with me ? *Phœnissa*, stay.
But this one trial more—Heroic truth,
Support me now !

S C E N E II.

SYPHAX, SOPHONISEA, PHOENISSA.

Syph. You seem to fly mē, Madam.
To shun my gratulations.—Here I come,
To join the general joy ; and I, sure I,
Who have to dotage, have to ruin lov'd you,
Must take a tender part in your success,
In your recover'd state.

Soph. 'Tis very well.

I thank you, Sir.

Syph. And gentle *Masiniſſa*,
Say, will he prove a very coming fool ?
All pliant, all devoted to your will ?
A duteous wretch like *Syphax* ?—Ha ! not mov'd !
Speak thou perfidious ! canst thou bear it thus ?
With such a steady countenance ? canst thou
Here see the man thou hast so grossly wrong'd,
And yet not sink in shame ? And yet not shake
n every guilty nerve ?

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D

Soph.

Soph. What have I done,
That I should tremble? that I should not dare
To bear thy presence? Was my heart to blame,
I'd tremble at myself and not at thee,
Proud man! Nor would I live to be ashamed.
For of all evils, to the generous, shame
Is the most deadly pang.—But you behold
My late engagement with a jealous, false,
And selfish eye.

Syph. Avenging Juno, hear!
And canst thou think to justify thyself?
I blush to hear thee, traitress!

Soph. Oh my soul!
Canst thou hear this, this base opprobrious language,
And yet be tamely calm?—Well, for this once
It shall be so—in pity to thy madness—
Impatient spirit, down!—Yes, *Syphax*, yes,
Yes, I will greatly justify myself;
Ev'n by the consort of the thundering Jove,
Who binds the holy marriage-vow, be judg'd.
And every generous heart, not meanly lost
In little low pursuits, will sure absolve me.
But in the tempest of the soul, when rage,
Loud indignation, unattentive pride,
And jealousy confound it, how can then
The nobler, *public* sentiments be heard!
Yet let me tell thee—

Syph. Thou canst tell me nought.
Away! away! nought but illusion, falsehood—

Soph. My heart will burst, in justice to myself,
If here I speak not; tho' thy rage, I know,
Can never be convinc'd, yet shall it be
Confounded.—What! must I renounce my freedom?
Forego the power of doing general good?

Yield

Yield myself up the slave, the barbarous triumph
Of insolent, enrag'd, inveterate *Rome* ?
And all for nothing but to grace thy fall ?
Nay, singly perish to retain the name,
The empty title of a captive's wife ?

For thee ; the *Romans* may be mild to thee ;
But I, a *Carthaginian*, I, whose blood
Holds unrelenting enmity to theirs ;
Who have myself much hurt them, and who live
Only to work them woe ; what, what can I
Hope from their vengeance, but the very dregs
Of the worst fate, the bitterness of bondage ?
Yet thou, kind man, thou, in thy generous love,
Would'st have me suffer that ; be bound to thee,
For that dire end alone, beyond the stretch
Of nature, and of law.

Syb. Confusion ! Law !

I know the laws permit thee, the gross laws
That rule the vulgar. I'm a captive, true ;
And therefore may'st thou plead a shameful right
To leave me to my chains—But say, thou base one !
Ungrateful ! say, for whom am I a captive ?
For whom has battle after battle bled ?
For whom my crown, my kingdom, and my all,
Been vilely cast away ? For one, ye gods !
Who leaves me for the victor, for the foe
I hold in utter endless detestation.
Fire ! fury ! hell !—Oh, I am richly paid !
But this it is to love a Woman—Woman !
The source of all disaster, all perdition !
Man in himself is social, would be happy,
Too happy, but the gods, to keep him wretched,
Curs'd him with woman ! fond, enchanting, smooth,
And harmless-seeming woman ; but at heart

All poison, serpents, tigers, furies, all
That is destructive, in one breast combin'd,
And gilded o'er with beauty !

Soph. Hapless man !

I pity thee ; this madness only fits
My bosom to compassion, not to rage.
Think as you list of our unhappy sex,
Too much subjected to your tyrant force ;
Yet know that all, we were not all at least
Form'd for your trifles, for your wanton hours.
Our passions too can sometimes soar above
The household task assign'd us, can extend
Beyond the narrow sphere of families,
And take great states into th' expanded heart,
As well as yours, ye partial to yourselves !
And this is my support, my joy, my glory ;
On these great principles, and these alone,
I still direct my conduct.

Syph. False as hell !

I loath your sex ! when it pretends to virtue.
You talk of honour, conscience, patriotism !
A female patriot !—Vanity !—Absurd !
Ev'n doating dull credulity would laugh
To hear you prate. Did ever woman yet
Form any better purpose in her thought,
Than how to please her pride or wanton will ?
Those are the principles on which you act,
Yes, those alone.

Soph. Must I then, must I, *Syphax*,
Give thee a bitter proof of what I say ?
I would not seem to heighten thy distress,
Not in the least insult thee. Thou art fall'n,
So Fate severe has will'd it, fall'n by me ;
I therefore have been patient : from another

Such

Such language, such indignity, had I'd
My soul to madness. But since driven so far,
I must remind thy blind injurious rage
Of our unhappy marriage.——

Syph. Dar'lt thou name it,
After such perfidy?

Soph. Allow me, *Syphax*,
Hear me but once! If what I here declare
Shines not with reason, and the clearest truth;
May I be base, despis'd, and dumb for ever!

I pray thee think, when unpropitious *Hymen*
Our hands united, how I stood engag'd.
Was I not blooming in the pride of youth,
And youthful hopes; sunk in a passion too,
Which few resign? yet then I married thee,
Because to Carthage deem'd a stronger friend;
For that alone. On these conditions, say,
Didst thou not take me, court me to thy throne?
Have I deceiv'd thee since? Have I dissembled?
To gain one purpose, e'er pretended what
I never felt? Thou canst not say I have.
And if that principle, which then inspir'd
My marrying thee, was right, it cannot now
Be wrong: Nay, since my native city wants
Assistance more, and sinking calls for aid,
'Tis still more right——

Syph. This reasoning is insult!

Soph. I'm sorry that thou dost oblige me to it.
Then in a word take my full open'd soul.
All love, but that of *Carthage*, I despise.
I formerly to *Masiniſſa* thee
Preferr'd not, nor to thee now *Masiniſſa*,
But *Carthage* to you both. And if preferring
Thousands to one, a whole collected people,

All Nature's tenderness, whate'er is sacred,
 The liberty, the welfare of a state,
 To one man's frantic happiness, be shame;
 Here, *Syphax*, I invoke it on my head!
 This set aside; I, careless of myself,
 And scorning prosperous state, had still been thine,
 In all the depth of misery proudly thine!
 But since the public good, the law supreme,
 Forbids it; I will leave thee with a kingdom,
 The same I found thee, or not reign myself.
 Alas! I see thee hurt—Why can'st thou here,
 Thus to inflame thee more?

Syph. Why, forcerefs? why?
 Thou complication of all deadly mischief!
 Thou lying, soothing, specious, charming fury!
 I'll tell the why—To breathe my great revenge!
 To throw this load of burning madness from me!
 To stab thee!—

Soph. Ha!—

Syph. —And springing from thy heart
 To quench me with thy blood!

[*Phœnissa interposes.*

Soph. Off, give me way!
Phænissa; tempt not thou his brutal rage.
 Me, me, he dares not murder: if he dares,
 Here let his fury strike; for I dare die.
 What holds thy trembling hand?

Phœn. Guards!

Soph. Seize the king.
 But look you treat him well, with all the state
 His dignity demands.

Syph. That care from thee
 Is worse than death.—The *Roman* trumpets!—Ha!
 Now

Now I bethink me, *Rome* will do me justice.
 Yes, I shall see thee walk the slave of *Rome*,
 Forget my wrongs, and glut me with the sight.
 Be that my best revenge.

Soph. Inhuman! that,
 If there is death in *Afric*, shall not be.

S C E N E III.

LÆLIUS, SYPHAX.

Lael. *Syphax*! alas, how fall'n! how chang'd
 from what

I here beheld thee once in pomp and splendor,
 At that illustrious interview, when *Rome*
 And *Carthage* met beneath this very roof,
 Their two great generals, *Asdrubal* and *Scipio*,
 To court thy friendship. Of the same repast
 Both gracefully partook, and both reclin'd
 On the same couch: for personal distaste
 And hatred seldom burn between the brave.
 Then the superior virtues of the *Roman*
 Gain'd all thy heart. Ev'n *Asdrubal* himself,
 With admiration struck and just despair,
 Own'd him as powerful at the social feast
 As in the battle. This thou may'st remember,
 And how thy faith was given before the Gods,
 And sworn and seal'd to *Scipio*; yet how false
 Thou since hast prov'd, I need not now recount:
 But let thy sufferings for thy guilt atone,
 The captive for the king. A *Roman* tongue

Scorns to pursue the triumph of the sword
With mean upbraidings.

Syph. Lælius, 'tis too true.
Curse on the cause!

Lælius. But where is Masinissa?
The brave young victor, the *Numidian Roman*!
Where is he? that my joy, my glad applause,
From envy pure, may hail his happy state.
Why that contemptuous smile?

Syph. Too credulous Roman!
I smile to think how this brave *Masinissa*,
This *Rome*-devoted hero, must still more
Attract thy praises; by a late exploit,
In every thing successful.

Læli. What is this?
These public shouts! A strange unusual joy
O'er all the captive city blazes wide.
What wanton riot reigns to-night in *Cirthe*?
Within these conquer'd walls?

Syph. This, Lælius, is
A night of triumph o'er my conqueror,
O'er *Masinissa*.

Læli. Masinissa! How?
Syph. Why, he to-night is married to my queen.
Læli. Impossible!—

Syph. Yes, she, the fury! she,
Who put the nuptial torch into my hand,
That set my throne, my palace, and my kingdom,
All in a blaze; she now has seiz'd on him,
Will turn him soon from *Rome*—I know her power;
Her lips distill unconquerable poison.
O glorious thought! her arts, her fatal love
Will crush him deep, beneath the mighty ruins
Of falling *Carthage*.

Læli.

Læl. Can it be? Amazement!

Syph. Nay learn it from himself.—He comes—

Away!

Ye furies, snatch me from his sight! For hell,
Its tortures all are gentle to the presence
Of a triumphant rival!

Læl. What is man!

SCENE IV.

MASINISSA, LÆLIUS.

Mas. Thou more than partner of this glorious day,
Which has from *Carthage* torn her chief support,
And tottering left her, I rejoice to see thee—
To *Cirta* welcome, *Lælius*.—Thy brave legions
How taste the sweet repose by valour purchas'd:
This city pours refreshment on their toils.
I order'd *Narva*—

Læl. Thanks to *Masinissa*.

All that is well.—But I observ'd the king
More loosely guarded than befits the state
Of such a captive. True, indeed, from him
There is not much to fear. The dangerous spirit
Is his imperious queen, his *Sophonisba*.
The pride, the rage of *Carthage*, live in her.
How? where is she?

Mas. She, *Lælius*? in my care.
Think not of her. I'll answer for her conduct.

Læl. Yes, if in chains. Till then, believe me,
prince,
It were as safe to answer for the winds,

That their loos'd fury will not rouse the waves,
 Or that the darted lightning will be harmless ;
 As promise peace from her.—But why so dark ?
 You shift your place, your countenance grows warm.
 It is not usual this in *Masiniſſa*.
 Pray what offence can asking for the queen,
 The *Roman* captive, give ?

Mas. Lælius, no more.
 You know my marriage.—*Syphax* has been busy—
 It is unkind to dally with my passion.

Læl. Ah, *Masiniſſa* ! was it then for this,
 Thy hurry hither from the recent battle ?
 Is the first instance of the *Roman* bounty
 Thus, thus abus'd ? They give thee back thy king-
 dom ;

And in return are of their captive robb'd ;
 Of all they valued, *Sophonisba*.—

Mas. Robb'd !
 How, *Lælius*, robb'd ?

Læl. Yes, *Masiniſſa*, robb'd.
 What is it else ? But I, this very night,
 Will here assert the majesty of *Rome*,
 And, mark me, tear her from the nuptial bed.

Mas. Oh Gods ! oh patience ! As soon, firey
Roman !

As soon thy rage might from her azure sphere
 Tear yonder moon.—The man who seizes her,
 Shall set his foot first on my bleeding heart.
 Of that be sure —And is it thus you treat
 Your firm allies ? Thus kings in friendship with you ?
 Of human passions strip them ?—Slaves indeed !
 If thus deny'd the common privilege
 Of nature, what the weakest creatures claim,
 A right to what they love.

Læl.

Lael. Out! out!—For shame!

This passion makes thee blind. Here is a war,
Which desolates the nations, has almost
Laid waste the world. How many widows, orphans,
And tender virgins, weep its rage in *Rome*!
Ev'n her great senate droops; her nobles fail;
Nature herself, by frequent prodigies,
Seems at this havock of her works to sicken:
And our *Ausonian* plains are now become
A horror to the sight: At each sad step,
Remembrance weeps. Yet her, the greatest prize
It hitherto has yielded; her, whose charms
Are only turn'd to whet its cruel point;
Thou to thy wedded breast hast wildly taken,
Hast purchas'd thee her beauties by the blood
Of thy protecting friends; and on a throne
Set her, this day recover'd by their arms.
Canst thou do this, and call thyself a king
Ally'd to *Rome*? Rash youth, the *Roman* people,
To kings who dare offend them thus, vouchsafe not
The honour of their friendship.—Thou hast thrown
That glory from thee, and must now be taught
To dread their wrath.

Maf. Be not so haughty, *Laelius*.
It scarce becomes the gentle *Scipio's* friend;
Suits not thy character, the tender manners
I still have mark'd in thee. I honour *Rome*;
But honour too myself, my vows, my queen:
Nor will, nor can I tamely hear thee threaten
To seize her like a slave.

Lael. I will be calm.
This thy rash deed, this unexpected shock,
Such a peculiar injury to me,
Thy friend and fellow-soldier, has perhaps

Snatch'd me too far. For hast thou not dishonour'd,
By this last action, a successful war,
Our common charge, trusted to us by *Scipio*?

Mas. Our charge from *Scipio* was to conquer

Syphax,

Not by a barbarous triumph to insult
His beauteous queen. Was *Sophonisba* made,
To follow weeping a proud victor's chariot,
She, the first mistress of my heart, who still
Reigns in my soul, and there will reign for ever?
At such a sight the warrior's eye might wet
His burning cheek; and all the *Roman* matrons,
Who lin'd the laurel'd way, agham'd and sad,
Turn from a captive brighter than themselves.
But *Scipio* will be milder.

Lael. I disdain

This thy surmise, and give it up to *Scipio*.
These passions are not comely.—Here to-morrow
Comes the proconsul. Meantime, *Masiniſſa*,
Ah, harden not thyself in flattering hope!
Scipio is mild, but steady.—Ha! the queen,
I think she hates a *Roman*—and will leave thee.

SCENE V.

SOPHONISBA, MASINISSA.

Soph. Was not that *Roman Laelius*, as I enter'd,
Who parted gloomy hence?

Mas. Madam, the same.

Soph. Unhappy *Afric*! since these haughty *Romans*
Have

Have in this lordly manner trod thy courts !

I read his fresh reproaches in thy face ;
The lesson'd pupil in thy fallen look,
In that forc'd smile, which sickens on thy cheek.

Maf. Oh say not so, thou rapture of my soul !
For while I fondly gaze upon thy charms,
I smile as joyous as the sun in *May* ;
Nor can my heart, by thee possess'd, retain
One painful thought.

Soph. Nay, tell me, *Masiniſſa* ;
How feels their tyranny, when 'tis brought home ?
When lawless grown, it touches what is dear ?
Pomp for a while may dazzle thoughtless man,
False glory blind him ; but there is a time,
When ev'n the slave in heart will spurn his chains,
Nor know submission more.—What said thy tyrant ?

Maf. His disappointment for a moment only
Burst in vain passion, and——

Soph. You stood abash'd ;
You bore his threats, and tamely-silent heard him,
Heard the fierce *Roman* mark me for his triumph:
Oh meanness !

Maf. Banish that unkind suspicion.
The thought enflam'd my soul. I vow'd my life,
My last *Massylian* to the sword, ere he
Should touch thy freedom with the least dishonour.
But that from *Scipio*——

Soph. *Scipio* !

Maf. That from him——

Soph. I tell thee, *Masiniſſa*, if from him
You gain my freedom, from myself conceal it.
I shall disdain such freedom.

Maf. *Sophonisba* !
Thou all my heart holds precious ! doubt no more.

Nor

To gild the happy world ; and all things smile
Like *Sophonisba*. Love and friendship sure
Have mark'd this day with all their choicest blessings ;
Oh ! *Sophonisba*'s mine ! and *Scipio* comes !

Nar. My lord, the trumpets speak his near approach.

Mas. I want his secret audience—Leave us, *Narva*.

SCENE II.

SCIPIO, MASINISSA.

Mas. *Scipio* ! more welcome than my tongue can speak !

Oh greatly, dearly welcome !

Scip. *Masinissa* !

My heart beats back thy joy.—A happy friend,
Rais'd by his prudence, fortitude, and valour,
O'er all his foes ; and on his native throne,
Amidst his rescued shouting subjects, set :
Say, can the gods in lavish bounty give
A sight more pleasing ?

Mas. My great friend and patron,
It was thy timely, thy restoring aid,
That brought me from the fearful desert-life,
To live again in state, and purple splendor.
Thy friendship arm'd me with the strength of *Rome*,
And now I wield the sceptre of my fathers,
See my dear people from the tyrant's scourge,
From *Syphax* freed ; I hear their glad applauses ;
And, to complete my happiness, have gain'd
A friend worth all. O gratitude, esteem,

And

And love like mine, with what divine delight
Ye fill the heart !

Scip. Heroic youth ! thy virtue
Has earn'd whate'er thy fortune can bestow.
It was thy patience, *Masiniſſa*, patience,
A champion clad in steel, that in the waste
Attended still thy step, and sav'd my friend
For better days. What cannot patience do !
A great design is seldom snatch'd at once ;
'Tis patience heaves it on. From savage Nature,
'Tis patience that has built up human life,
The nurse of arts ! and *Rome* exalts her head,
An everlasting monument of patience.

Mas. If I have that, or any virtue, *Scipio*,
'Tis copy'd all from thee.

Scip. No, *Masiniſſa*,
'Tis all unborrow'd, the spontaneous growth
Of nature in thy breast.—Friendship for once
Must, tho' thou blushest, wear a liberal tongue ;
Must tell thee, noble youth, that long experience
In councils, battles, many a hard event,
Has found thee still so constant, so sincere,
So wise, so brave, so generous, so humane,
So well temper'd, and so fitly turn'd
For what is either great or good in life,
As casts distinguish'd honour on thy country,
And cannot but endear thee to the *Romans*.
For me, I think my labours all repaid,
My wars in *Afric*. *Masiniſſa's* friendship
Rewards them all. But that my dearest triumph,
To have assisted thy forlorn estate,
And lent a happy hand in raising thee
To thy paternal throne, usurp'd by *Syphax*,
The greatest service could be done my country.

Distracted

Distracted *Afric*, and mankind in general,
Was thus to aid thy worth. To put the power
Of sovereign rule into the good man's hand,
Is giving peace and happiness to millions.

But has my friend, since late we parted armies,
Since he with *Lælius* acted such a brave,
Auspicious part against the common foe;
Has he been blameless quite? has he consider'd,
How pleasure often on the youthful heart,
Beneath the rosy soft disguise of love,
(All sweetness, smiles, and seeming innocence)
Steals unperceiv'd, and lays the victor low?
I would not, cannot, put thee to the pain—
—It pains me deeper—of the least reproach.—
Let thy too faithful memory supply
The rest.

[*Pausing.*

Thy silence, that dejected look,
That honest colour flushing o'er thy cheek,
Impart thy better soul.

Mas. Oh my good lord!

Oh *Scipio*! Love has seiz'd me, tyrant Love
Inthralls my soul. I am undone by love!

Scip. And art thou then to ruin reconcil'd?
Tam'd to destruction! wilt thou be undone?
Resign the towering thought? the vast design,
With future glories big? the warrior's wreath?
The praise of senates? an applauding world?
All for a sigh? all for a soft embrace?
For a gay transient fancy, *Masiniſſa*?
For shame, my friend! for honour's sake, for virtue's!
Sit not with folded arms, despairing, weak,
Like a sick virgin sighing to the gale,
Till sure destruction comes—Alas, how chang'd
From him, the man I lov'd!

Mas.

Mas. How chang'd, indeed !
 The time has been, when, fir'd from *Scipio's* tongue,
 My soul had mounted in a flame with his.—
 Where is ambition flown ? Hopeless attempt !
 Can love like mine be quell'd ? Can I forget
 What still possesses, charms my thoughts for ever ?
 Throw scornful from me what I hold most dear ?
 Not feel the force of excellence ? To joy
 Be dead ? and undelighted with delight ?
 Hold, let me think a moment—no ! no ! no !
 I am unequal to thy virtue, *Scipio* !

Scip. Fie, *Masniſſa*, fie ! By Heavens ! I blush
 At thy dejection, this degenerate language,
 What ! perish for a woman ! Ruin all,
 All the fair deeds which an admiring world
 Hopes from thy riper years ; only to sooth
 A stubborn fancy, a luxurious will ?

How must it, think you, sound in future story ?
 Young *Masniſſa* was a virtuous prince,
 And *Afric* smil'd beneath his early ray ;
 But that a *Carthaginian* captive came,
 By whom untimely in the common fate
 Of love he fell. The wise will scorn the page,
 And all thy praise be some fond maid exclaiming,
 Where are those lovers now ? O rather, rather,
 Had I ne'er seen the vital light of heaven,
 Than like the vulgar live, and like them die !
 Ambition sickens at the very thought.—
 To puff, and bustle here from day to day,
 Lost in the passions of inglorious life,
 Joys which the careless brutes possess above us.
 And when some years, each duller than another,
 Are thus elaps'd, in nauseous pangs to die ;
 And pass away, like those forgotten things,

That

That soon become as they had never been.

Mas. And am I dead to this?

Scip. The gods, my friend,
Who train up heroes in Misfortune's school,
Have shock thee with Adversity, with each
Illustrious evil that can raise, expand,
And fortify the mind. Thy rooted worth
Has stood these wintry blasts, grown stronger by them.
Shall then in prosperoua times, while all is mild,
All vernal, fair; and glory blows around thee;
Shall then the *dead Serene* of pleasure come,
And lay thy faded honours in the dust?

Mas. O gentle *Scipio*! spare me, spare my weakness.

Scip. Remember *Hannibal*—A signal proof,
A fresh example of destructive pleasure.
He was the dread of nations, once of *Rome*!
When from *Bellona's* bosom, nurs'd in camps,
And hard with toil, he down the rugged *Alps*,
Rush'd like a torrent over *Italy*;
Unconquer'd till the loose delights of *Capua*
Sunk his victorious arm, his genius broke,
Perfum'd, and made a lover of the hero.
Lo! now he droops in *Bruttium*, fear'd no more.
Remember him; and yet resume thy spirit,
Ere it be quite dissolv'd.

Mas. Shall *Scipio* stoop,
Thus to regard, to teach me wisdom thus;
And yet a stupid anguish at my heart
Repel whate'er he says?—But why, my friend,
Why should we kill the best of passions, love?
It aids the hero, bids ambition rise
To nobler heights, inspires immortal deeds,
Ev'n softens brutes, and adds a grace to virtue.

Scip.

Scip. There is a holy tenderness indeed,
 A virtuous, social, sympathetic love,
 That binds, supports, and sweetens human life.
 But is thy passion such? List, *Masiniſſa*,
 While I the hardest office of a friend
 Discharge; and, with a necessary hand,
 A hand, tho' harsh at present, truly tender,
 I paint this passion. And if then thou still
 Art bent to soothe it, I must sighing leave thee,
 To what the gods think fit.

Mas. O never, *Scipio*!

O never leave me to myself! Speak on.
 I dread and yet desire thy friendly hand.

Scip. I hope that *Masiniſſa* needs not now
 Be told, how much his happiness is mine;
 With what a warm benevolence I'd spring
 To raise, confirm it, to prevent his wishes
 In every right pursuit!—But while he rages,
 Burns in a fever, shall I let him quaff
 Delicious poison for a cooling draught,
 In foolish pity to his thirst? shall I
 Let a swift flame consume him as he sleeps,
 Because his dreams are gay? shall I indulge
 A frenzy flash'd from an infectious eye,
 A sudden impulse unprov'd by reason?
 Nay, by thy cool deliberate thought condemn'd?
 Resolv'd against?—A passion for a woman,
 Who has abus'd thee basely? left thy youth,
 Thy love as sweet, as tender as the spring,
 The blooming hero for the hoary tyrant?
 And now who makes thy sheltering arms alone
 Her last retreat, to save her from the vengeance
 Which ev'n her very perfidy to thee
 Has brought upon her head?—Nor is this all.—
 A woman who will ply her deepest arts,

(Ah!

(Ah! too prevailing, as appears already)
 Will never rest till *Syphax*' fate is thine;
 Till Friendship weeping flies, we join no more
 In glorious deeds, and thou fall off from *Rome*?
 I could add too, that there is something cruel,
 Inhuman in thy passion. Does not *Syphax*,
 While thou rejoicest, die? The generous heart
 Should scorn a pleasure which gives others pain.

If this, my friend, all this consider'd deep,
 Alarm thee not, nor rouse thy resolution,
 And call the hero from his wanton slumber,
 Then *Masiniissa*'s lost.

Mas. Oh, I am pierc'd!
 In every thought am pierc'd! 'Tis all too true.—
 I would, but can't deny it.—Whither, whither,
 Thro' what enchanted wilds have I been wandering?
 They seem'd *Elysium*, the delightful plains,
 The happy groves of heroes and of lovers:
 But the Divinity that breathes in thee
 Has broke the charm, and I am in a desert,
 Far from the land of peace. It was but lately
 That a pure joyous calm o'erspread my soul,
 And reason tun'd my passions into bliss;
 When love came hurrying in, and with rash hand
 Mix'd them delirious till they now ferment
 To misery. There is no reasoning down
 This deep, deep anguish! this continual pang!
 A thousand things! whene'er my raptur'd thought
 Runs back a little—But I will not think.—
 And yet I must.—Oh Gods! that I could lose
 What a few hours have on my memory gtav'd
 In adamant!

Scip. But one strong effort more,
 And the fair field is thine—A conquest far

Excelling that o'er *Syphax*. What remains,
 Since now thy madness to thyself appears,
 But an immediate manly resolution,
 To shake off this effeminate disease;
 These soft ideas, which seduce thy soul,
 Make it all idle, weak, inglorious, wild,
 A scene of dreams; to give them to the winds,
 And be my former friend, thyself again?

I joy to find thee touch'd by generous motives,
 And that I need not bid thee recollect,
 Whose awful property thou hast usurp'd;
 Need not assure thee, that the *Roman* people,
 The senators of *Rome*, will never suffer
 A dangerous woman, their devoted foe,
 A woman, whose irrefragable spirit
 Has in great part sustain'd this bloody war,
 Whose charms corrupted *Syphax* from their side,
 To ruin thee too, taint thy faithful breast,
 And kindle future war. No, Fate itself
 Is not more steady to the right than they.
 And, where the public good but seems concern'd,
 No motive their impenetrable hearts,
 Nor fear nor tenderness, can touch: such is
 The spirit that has rais'd Imperial *Rome*.

Maf. Ah, killing truth!—But I have promis'd,
Scipio!

Have sworn to save her from the *Roman* power.
 My plighted faith is pass'd, my hand is given.
 And, by the conscious gods! who mark'd my vows,
 The whole united world shall never have her.
 For I will die a thousand thousand deaths,
 With all *Maffylia* in one field expire,
 Ere to the lowest wretch, much less to her

I love, to *Sophonisba*, to my queen,
I violate my word.

Scip. My heart approves
Thy resolution, thy determin'd honour.
For ever sacred be thy word, and oath !
But thus divided, how to keep thy faith
At once to *Rome* and *Sophonisba* ; how
To save her from our chains, and yet thyself
From greater bondage ; this thy secret thought
Can best inform thee.

Maf. Agony ! Distraction !
These wilful tears !—O look not on me, *Scipio* !
For I'm a child again.

Scip. Thy tears are no reproach,
Tears oft look graceful on the manly cheek.
The cruel cannot weep. Lo ! Friendship's eye
Gives thee the drop it would refuse itself.
I know 'tis hard, wounds every bleeding nerve
About thy heart, thus to tear off thy passion.
But for that very reason, *Masnissa*,
'Tis hop'd from thee. The harder, thence results
The greater glory.—Why should we pretend
To conquer nations, and to rule mankind,
Pre-eminent in glory, place, and power,
While slaves at heart ? while by fantastic turns
Our frantic passions reign ? This very thought
Should turn our pomp to shame, disgrace our triumphs ;
And, when the shouts of millions rend our ears,
Whisper reproach.—O ye celestial powers !
What is it in a torrent of success,
To overflow the world ; if by the stream
Our own enfeebled minds are borne away
From reason and from virtue ? Real glory

Springs

Springs from the silent conquest of ourselves ;
 And without that the conqueror is nought
 But the first slave.—Then rouse thee, *Masnissa* !
 Nor in one weakness all thy virtues lose ;
 And, oh ; beware of long, of vain repentance !

Mas. Well ! well ! no more.—It is but dying
 too !

SCENE III.

Scipio alone.

I wish I have not urg'd the truth to rigour !
 There is a time when virtue grows severe,
 Too much for nature, and almost even cruel.

SCENE IV.

Scipio, Lælius.

Scip. Poor *Masnissa*, *Lælius*, is undone ;
 Betwixt his passion and his reason tost
 In miserable conflict.

Læl. Entering, *Scipio*,
 He shot athwart me, nor vouchsaf'd one look.
 Hung on his clouded brow I mark'd despair,
 And his eye glaring with some dire resolve.
 Fast o'er his cheek too ran the hasty tear.
 It were great pity that he should be lost.

Scip. By Heavens ! to lose him were a shock, as if
 I lost thee, *Lælius*, lost my dearest brother.

Bound

Bound up in friendship for our infant years,
A thousand lovely qualities endear him,
Only too warm of heart.

Lael. What shall be done?

Scip. Here let it rest till time abates his passion.
Nature is nature, *Laelius*, let the wise
Say what they please. But now perhaps he dies.—
Haste! haste! and give him hope.—I have not time
To tell thee what.—Thy prudence will direct—
Whatever is consistent with my honour,
My duty to the public, and my friendship
To him himself, say, promise, shall be done.
I hope returning reason will prevent
Our farther care.

Lael. I fly with joy.

Scip. His life

Not only save, but *Sophonisba's* too:
For both, I fear, are in this passion mixt.

Lael. It shall be done.

SCENE V.

SCIPIO *alone.*

If friendship suffers thus;
When love pours in his added violence,
What are the pangs which *Masiniissa* feels!

SCENE VI.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA.

Soph. Yes, *Mafniffa* loves me—Heavens! how fond!

But yet I know not what hangs on my spirit,
A dismal boding; for this fatal *Scipio*,
I dread his virtues; this prevailing *Roman*,
Ev'n now perhaps deludes the generous king,
Fires his ambition with mistaken glory,
Demands me from him; for full well he knows,
That, while I live, I must intend their ruin.

Phæn. Madam, these fears—

Soph. And yet it cannot be.

Can *Scipio*, whom ev'n hostile fame proclaims
Of perfect honour, and of polish'd manners,
Smooth, artful, winning, moderate, and wise,
Make such a wild demand? Or, if he could,
Can *Mafniffa* grant it? give his queen,
Whom love and honour bind him to protect,
Yield her a captive to triumphant *Rome*?
'Tis baseness to suspect it; 'tis inhuman.

What then remains?—Suppose they should resolve
By right of war to seize me for their prize.—
Ay, there it kills!—What can his single arm
Against the *Roman* power? that very power
By which he stands restor'd? Distracting thought!
Still o'er my head the rod of bondage hangs,
Shame on my weakness!—This poor catching hope,
This transient taste of joy—will only more
Imbitter death.

Phæn.

Phæn. A moment will decide.

Madam, till then——

Soph. Would I had dy'd before !
And am I dreaming here ? Here ! from the *Romans*
Beseeching I may live to swell their triumph ?
When my free spirit should ere now have join'd
That great assembly, those devoted shades,
Who scorn'd to live till liberty was lost,
But, ere their country fell, abhorr'd the light.

Whence this pale slave ? he trembles with his
message.

S C E N E VII.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA ; and to them a Slave,
with a letter and poison from MASINISSA.

Slave, (kneeling.) This, Madam, from the king,
and this.

Soph. Ha !—Stay.

[*Reads the letter.*]

Rejoice, *Phænissa* ! Give me joy, my friend !
For here is liberty ! my fears are vain.
The hand of *Rome* can never touch me more !
Hail ! perfect freedom, hail !

Phæn. How ? what ? my queen !
Ah ! what is this ? [Pointing to the poison.]

Soph. The first of blessings, death.

Phæn. Alas ! alas ! can I rejoice in that ?

Soph. Shift not thy colour at the sound of death ;
For death appears not in a dreary light,

Seems not a blank to me, a loss of all
 Those fond sensations, those enchanting dreams,
 Which cheat a toiling world from day to day,
 And form the whole of happiness they know.
 It is to me perfection, glory, triumph,
 Nay, fondly would I chuse it, tho' persuaded
 It were a long dark night without a morning,
 To bondage far prefer it ! since it is
 Deliverance from a world where *Romans* rule,
 Where violence prevails—and timely too—
 Before my country falls ; before I feel
 As many stripes, as many chains, and deaths,
 As there are lives in *Carthage*—Glorious charter !
 By which I hold immortal life and freedom,
 Come, let me read thee once again.—And then,
 Obey the mandate. [*Reads the letter aloud.*]

MASINISSA to his QUEEN.

*The Gods know with what pleasure I would have kept
 my faith to Sophonisba in another manner. But since this
 fatal bowl can alone deliver thee from the Romans ; call
 to mind thy father, thy country, that thou hast been the
 wife of two kings ; and act up to the dictates of thy own
 heart. I will not long survive thee.*

Oh, 'tis wondrous well !
 Ye Gods of death who rule the *Syagian* gloom !
 Ye who have greatly dy'd ! I come ! I come !
 I die contented, since I die a queen.
 By *Rome* untouch'd, unsullied by their power ;
 So much their terror that I must not live.

And thou, go tell the king, if this is all
 The nuptial present he can send his bride,

I thank

I thank him for it—But that death had worn
An easier face before I had trusted him.
Add, hither had he come, I could have taught
Him how to die.—I linger not, remember,
I stand not shivering on the brink of life ;
And, but these votive drops, which grateful thus
[Taking from them the poison.
To Jove the high Deliverer I shed,
Assure him that I drank it, drank it all,
With an unalter'd smile——Away. *[Drinks.]*

S C E N E VIII.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA.

Soph. My friend !

In tears, my friend ! Dishonour not my death
With womanish complaints. Weep not for me ;
Weep for thyself, *Phœnissa*, for thy country,
But not for me. There is a certain hour,
Which one would wish all undisturb'd and bright,
No care, no sorrow, no dejected passions ;
And that is when we die, when hence we go,
Ne'er to be seen again ; then let us spread
A bold exalted wing, and the last voice
We hear be that of wonder and applause.

Phæn. Who with such virtue wishes not to die!

Soph. And is the sacred moment then so near?
The moment, when yon sun, those heavens, this
earth,
Hateful to me, polluted by the *Romans*,

And all the busy slavish race of men,
 Shall sink at once: and strait another state,
 New scenes, new joys, new faculties, new wonders,
 Rise on a sudden round: but this the gods
 In clouds and horror wrap, or none would live.
 Oh to be there!—my breast begins to burn;
 My tainted heart grows sick.—Ah me! *Phœnissa!*
 How many virgins, infants, tender wretches,
 Must feel these pangs, ere *Caribage* is no more!
 Soft lead me to my couch—My shivering limbs,
 Do this last office, and then rest for ever.
 I pray thee weep not, pierce me not with groans.
 The king too here—Nay then my death is full!

S C E N E IX.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA, MASINISSA, LÆLIUS,
 NARVA.

Mas. Has *Sophonisba* drunk this cursed bowl?
 Oh horror! horror! what a sight is here!

Soph. Had I not drunk it, *Masinissa*, then
 I had deserv'd it.

Mas. Exquisite distress!
 Oh bitter, bitter fate! and this last hope
 Completes my woe.

Soph. When will these ears be deaf
 To misery's complaint? these eyes be blind
 To mischief wrought by *Rome*?

Mas.

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Mas. Too soon ! too soon !

Ah, why so hasty ? But a little while
Hadst thou delay'd this horrid draught ; I then
Had been as happy, as I now am wretched !

Soph. What means this talk of hope ? of coward
waiting ?

Mas. What have I done ? O Heavens ! I cannot
think

On my rash deed !—But while I talk she dies !
And how ? what ? where am I then ?—Say, canst
thou

Forgive me, *Sophonisba* ?

Soph. Ye, and more,
More than forgive thee, thank thee, *Masiniſſa*.
Hadst thou been weak, and dally'd with my freedom,
Till by proud *Rome* enslav'd ; that injury
I never had forgiven.

Mas. I came with life !

Lælius and I from *Scipio* hasted hither ;
But death was here before us—this vile poison !

Soph. With life !—There was some merit in the
poison ;

But this destroys it all.—And could'st thou think
Me mean enough to take it ?—Oh ! *Phœniſſa* !
This mortal toil is almost at an end.—
Receive my parting soul.

Pbæn. Alas ! my queen !

Mas. Dies ! dies ! and scorns me !—Mercy ! *Sophonisba* !

Grant one forgiving look, while yet thou canst ;
Or death itself, the grave cannot relieve me :
But, with the furies join'd, my frantic ghost

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SOPHONISBA.

Will howl for ever,—Quivering! and pale!
Have I done this?

Soph. But for *Rome*

We might have been most happy.—I conjure thee,
Be mild to *Syphax*; for my sake, regard him,
And let thy rage against him die with me.
Farewell!—'Tis done!—O never, never, *Carthage*,
Shall I behold thee more! *[Dies.]*

Mas. Dead! dead! oh, dead!

Is there no death for me?

[Snatches Lælius's sword to stab himself.]

Læl. Hold, *Masiniſſa*!

Mas. And would'st thou make a coward of me,
Lælius?

Have me survive that murder'd excellence?

Did she not stir? Ha! Who has shock'd my brain?
It whirls, it blazes.—Was it thou, old man?

Nar. Alas! alas! good *Masiniſſa*, softly!
Let me conduct thee to thy couch.

Mas. The grave

Shall be my couch.—Ye cannot make me live!
Ye strive in vain!—Off!—crowd not thus around
me!

For I will hear, see, think no more!—Thou sun,
With-hold thy hated beams! And all I want
Of thee, kind earth, is an immediate grave!
Ay, there she lies!—Why to that pallid sweetness
Cannot I, Nature! lay my lips, and die!

[Throws himself beside her.]

Læl. See there the ruins of the noble mind,
When from calm Reason passion tears the sway.
What pity she should perish!—Cruel War,

'Tis

'Tis not the least misfortune in thy train,
~~That oft by thee the brave destroy the brave.~~
She had a *Roman* soul ; for every one
Who loves, like her, his country, is a *Roman*.

Whether on *Afric's* sandy plains he glows,
Or lives untam'd among *Riphaean* snows,
If generous Liberty the breast inflame,
The gloomy *Libyan* then deserves that name :
And, warm with freedom under frozen skies,
In farthest *Britain* *Romans* yet may rise.

The End of the Fifth Act.

E P I L O G U E.

By a FRIEND.

Spoken by Mrs. CIBBER.

*N*OW, I'm afraid, the modest taste in vogue
Demands a strong, high-season'd epilogue.
Else might some silly soul take pity's part,
And odious virtue sink into the heart.

Our squeamish author scruples this proceeding ;
He says, it hurts sound morals, and good breeding ;
Nor Sophonisba would be here produce,
A glaring model of no private use.
Ladies, he bid me say, behold your Cato.
What tho' no Stoic she, nor read in Plato ;
Yet sure she offer'd, for her country's sake,
A sacrifice, which Cato could not make—
—Already, now, these wicked men are sneering,
Some wresting what one says, and others leering.
I vow they have not force—for publick spirit.
That, ladies, must be your superior merit.

Mercy forbid ! we should lay down our lives ;
Like these old, Punic, barbarous heathen wives !
Spare Christian blood.—But sure the devil's in her,
Who for her country would not lose a pinner.

—Lard! how could such a creature show her face?
 How?—Just as you do there—thro' Brussels Lace.
 The Roman fair, the public in distress,
 Gave up the dearest ornament of dress.
 How much more cheaply might you gain applause?
 —One yard of Ribband, and two ells of Gause.
 And Gause each deep-read critic must adore;
 Your Roman ladies dress'd in Gause all o'er.
 Should you, fair patriots come to dress so thin;
 How clear might all your—sentiments be seen!
 To foreign looms no longer owe your charms;
 Nor make their trade more fatal than their arms.
 Each British dame, who courts her country's praise,
 By quitting these outlandish modes, might raise
 (Not from yon powder'd band, so thin and spruce)
 Ten able-bodied men, for—public use.

But now a serious word about the play.——
 Auspicious smile on this his first essay;
 Ye generous Britons! your own sons inspire;
 Let your applauses fan their native fire.
 Then other Shakespears yet may rouse the stage,
 And other Otways melt another age.

*A NUPTIAL SONG, intended to have been
inserted in the Fourth Act.*

COME, gentle *Venus*! and assuage
A warring world, a bleeding age.
For Nature lives beneath thy ray,
The wintry tempests haste away,
A lucid calm invests the sea,
Thy native deep is full of thee;
The flowering earth, where-e'er you fly,
Is all o'er spring, all sun the sky.
A genial spirit warms the breeze;
Unseen among the blooming trees,
The feather'd lovers tune their throat,
The desert growls a soften'd note,
Glad o'er the meads the cattle bound,
And love and harmony go round.

But chief into the human heart
You strike the dear delicious dart;
You teach us pleasing pangs to know,
To languish in luxurious woe,
To feel the generous passions rise,
Grow good by gazing, mild by sighs;
Each happy moment to improve,
And fill the perfect year with love.

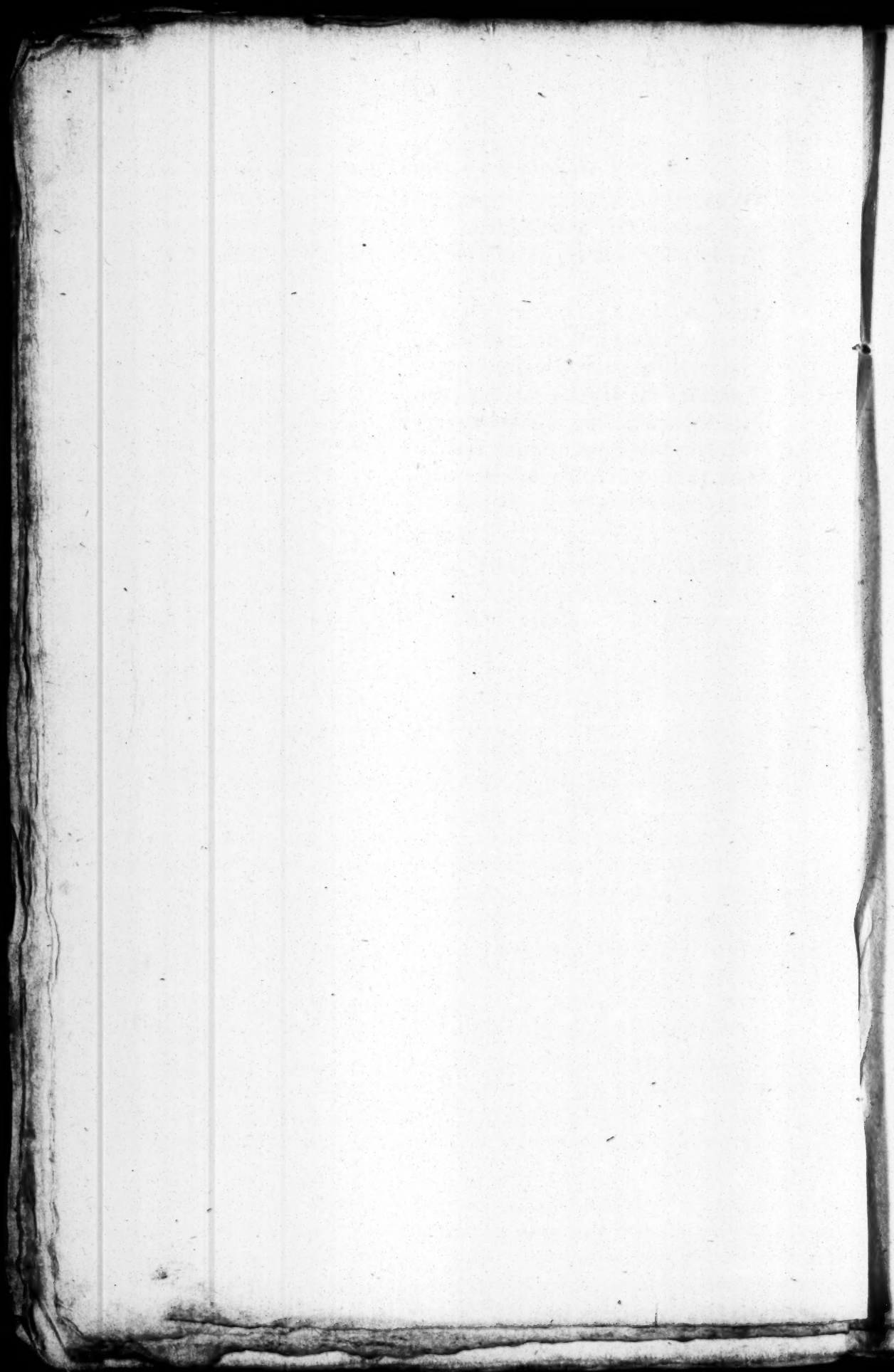
Come, thou delight of heaven and earth!
To whom all creatures owe their birth!

Oh

NUPTIAL SONG. 85

Oh come, sweet smiling! tender, come!
 And yet prevent our final doom:
 For long the furious god of war
 Has crush'd us with his iron car,
 Has rang'd along our ruin'd plains,
 Has soil'd them with his cruel stains,
 Has sunk our youth in endless sleep,
 And made the widow'd virgin weep.
 Nor let him feel thy wonted charms;
 Oh, take him to thy twining arms!
 And, while thy bosom heaves on his,
 While deep he prints the humid kifs;
 Ah then! his stormy heart controul,
 And sigh thyself into his soul.

AGAMEM-



AGAMEMNON.

A

TRAGEDY.



TO HER
ROYAL HIGHNESS
THE
Princess of *Wales*.

MADAM,

I Humbly beg leave to put this Tragedy under the Protection of Your Royal Highness ; and hope You will condescend to accept of it, as a Testimony

DEDICATION.

simony of the most unfeigned and zealous Respect, due no less to Your Amiable Virtues, than to Your High Rank, from,

MADAM,

Your ROYAL HIGHNESS'S

Most dutiful, and most

Obedient humble Servant,

JAMES THOMSON.

P R O L O G U E.

By the Author of EURYDICE.

Spoken by Mr. QUIN.

WHEN this decisive night, at length, appears,
The night of every author's hopes and fears ;
What shifts to bribe applause, poor poets try !
In all the forms of wit they court and lye :
These meanly beg it, as an alms ; and Those
By boastful bluster dazzle and impose.

Nor poorly fearful, nor securely vain,
Ours would, by honest ways, that grace obtain,
Would, as a free-born wit, be fairly try'd :
And then—let truth and candour, fair, decide.
He courts no friend, who blindly comes to praise ;
He dreads no foe—but whom his faults may raise.

Indulge a generous pride, that bids him own,
He aims to please by noble means alone ;
By what may win the judgment, wake the heart,
Inspiring nature, and directing art ;
By scenes, so wrought, so rais'd, as may command
Applause more from the head, than from the hand.

Important is the moral we would teach :
(Oh, may this Island practise what we preach !)
Vice in its first approach with care to shun ;
The wretch, who once engages, is undone.
Crimes lead to greater crimes, and link so streight,
What first was accident, at last is fate :
Guil's hapless servant sinks into a slave ;
And Virtue's last sad strugglings cannot save.

“ As such our fair attempts, we hope to see
“ Our judges,—here at least,—from influence free ;
“ One place—unbias'd yet by party rage,—
“ Where only honour votes,—the British stage.
“ We ask for justice, for indulgence sue :
“ Our last, best licence must proceed from you.”

The

The Persons represented.

AGAMEMNON,	Mr. <i>Quin.</i>
EGISTHUS,	Mr. <i>Milward.</i>
MELISANDER,	Mr. <i>Cibber.</i>
ARCAS,	Mr. <i>Wright.</i>
ORESTES,	Mr. <i>Green.</i>
TALTHYBIUS,	Mr. <i>Havard.</i>
OFFICERS, &c.	
CLYTEMNESTRA,	Mrs. <i>Porter.</i>
CASSANDRA,	Mrs. <i>Cibber.</i>
ELECTRA,	Miss <i>Brett.</i>
ATTENDANT of <i>Clytemnestra,</i>	Mrs. <i>Furnival.</i>

Trojan Captives, &c.

S C E N E,

The Palace of Agamemnon, in Mycenæ.





Wale delin.

G. V. Neijt sc.

Agamemnon.

AGAMEMNON.

A

TRAGEDY.

ACT I. SCENE I.

CLYTEMNESTRA, *sitting in a disconsolate posture,*
and her ATTENDANT.

Attend. O Clytemnestra! O my royal mistress!
Can then no comfort soothe your woes
a while?

E'er since that flaming signal of sack'd Troy,
That signal fix'd, and promis'd by the king,
Was seen some nights ago, nor food has pass'd
Your loathing lips, nor sleep has bless'd your eyes.
Or, if perhaps a transient slumber hush'd
Your sighs a moment, and restrain'd your tears,
Sudden, you, starting wildly, would exclaim
Of Guilt, *Egisthus*, *Troy*, and *Agamemnon*.
Sure, 'tis too much, my queen.

Clyt.

Clyt. Away ! away !

Since my lost state admits of no relief,
To that sad comfort of the wretched leave me,
To yield me to my sorrows.

Attend. Hear me, Madam,

Once the dear burden of these aged arms !
My tender care from life's first opening bud !
My joy ! my glory ! hear your faithful servant,
And, let me add, your friend.—In reason's eye,
That never judges on a partial view,
Far less than your misfortune is your guilt.—
Your guilt !—Forgive me, 'tis too harsh a word,
For what deserves compassion more than blame.
I know the treacherous ways by which you sunk,
From pleasing peace, to these unhappy fears,
This anxious tumult.—

Clyt. Hide me from the view !

All comfort is in vain.—Away !

Attend. Allow me,

To plead your injur'd cause against yourself.

When *Agamemnon* led the *Greeks* to *Troy*,
And left you, Madam, for the pomp of war;
Left you the pride of *Greece* in full-blown beauty,
The kindest mother and the fondest wife ;
If Fame says true, for *Trojan* captives left you—
But that apart—how did he leave you, say ?
Afflicted, outrag'd, as a queen and mother ;
Betray'd to *Aulis* with your first-born Hope,
The blooming *Iphigenia*, under feint
Of her immediate marriage to *Achilles* ;
And there no sooner at the wind-bound fleet
Arriv'd, but you beheld her spotless blood
Stream on the sully'd altar of *Diana*,

The

The price of winds, of a dear-purchas'd gale,
To bear them on to *Troy*. Thus pierc'd with grief,
Then fir'd by turns to rage, almost to vengeance,
At an ambitious cruel haughty husband ;
While all your passions were together mix'd,
And ready for a change ; was you not left
In a submissive soothing lover's power,
Ordain'd your partner in the sovereign rule,
O'er *Argos* and *Mycenæ*, but to you
As pliant still as *Agamemnon* stately ?

Chor. (*rising.*) Alas ! too true ! You touch the source
of woe.

Why did you leave me, barbarous *Agamemnon* ?
Why leave me weeping o'er a murder'd daughter ?
Why helpless leave me to a troubled mind ?
Ah ! why yourself betray me to a lover ?
What arts *Egisthus* us'd, too well I know ;
All that can softly steal, or gayly charm,
The heart of woman——Hence, dear sad ideas !
Destroyers, hence ! And dare you tempt me still,
Perfidious *Syrens* ! in that very moment
When your false charms have wreck'd my peace for
ever ?

Oh, Nature ! wherefore, Nature, are we form'd
One contradiction ? the continual sport
Of fighting powers ! Oh ! wherefore hast thou sown
Such war within us, such unequal conflict,
Between slow reason and impetuous passion ?
Passion resistless hurries us away,
Ere lingering reason to our aid can come ;
And to upbraid us then it only serves.
Tormentor, cease !

Attend.

Attend. You wrong yourself too much.
 Think, Madam, how for years you baffled love:
 Nor could *Egisthus*, tho' he touch'd your heart,
 Tho' many a midnight tear, and secret sigh,
 To me, and me alone, disclos'd the pangs,
 That dimm'd your fading cheek; yet could he not,
 With all his arts, his love, submission, charms,
 O'ercome the struggling purpose of your soul;
 Till *Melisander*, to a desert isle,
 He banish'd from your ear.

Clyt. Ah, *Melisander*!

Giv'n to the beasts a prey, or wilder famine;
 Ah, perish'd friend! serene directing light,
 By *Agamemnon* left to guide my counsels;
 Whom every science, every muse adorn'd,
 While the good honest heart enrich'd them all;
 Oh, hadst thou still remain'd, then I, this day,
 Had been as glorious as I now am wretched!
 There breathes a felt divinity in virtue,
 In candid unassuming generous virtue,
 Whose very silence speaks; and which inspires,
 Without proud formal lessons, a disdain
 Of mean injurious vice. But lost with him,
 With *Melisander*, reason, honour, pride,
 Truth, sound advice, my better genius fled;
 I friendless, flatter'd, importun'd, and charm'd,
 Was left alone with all-seducing Love;
 Love, to the future blind, each sober thought,
 Each consequence despising, scorning all,
 But what its own enchanting dreams suggest.
 What could I do?—Away! self-flattering guilt!
 I should have thought, when honour once is fully'd,
 Not weeping mercy's tears can wash it clean;

And

And that one blot on mine diffus'd a stain
 O'er the proud honour of a wedded king,
 And o'er my children's, my poor blameless children's!
 Whose cheeks will kindle at their mother's name:
 I should have thought—Would I could think no more!
 To think is torture!

Attend. What avails it, Madam—

Clyt. O *Melissander*! If the dead could hear,
 I would invoke thy friendly influence now,
 Would wish thee present in this hour of trouble.
 Perhaps there is in wisdom, gentle wisdom,
 That knows our frailties, therefore can forgive,
 Some healing comfort for a guilty mind,
 Some power to charm it into peace again,
 And bid it smile anew with right affections.
 No! fruitless wish!—It cannot, cannot be!
Egisthus who may henceforth give me laws,
 Dread of discovery, that worst tyrant, shame,
 And my own conscious blotted heart forbid it,
 Forbid retreat——

Attend. Madam, behold the man,
 Who, then upon the watch, observ'd the signal
 Of conquer'd *Troy*, and now attends your orders
 To give a full account of what he saw.

S C E N E II.

CLYTEMNESTRA, her ATTENDANTS, and the
 MAN who observ'd the signal.

Clyt. Are you then sure that you beheld this signal?
 Or was it not some vision of the brain,

VOL. II.

F

That

That painted, while you slept, your waking wish ?
Or else perhaps some meteor of the night ?

Man. Madam, *Troy* doubtless lies one heap of
ruins ;

I saw the signal of its fate distinctly.

The night was dark and still. A heavier gloom
Ne'er cover'd earth. In low'ring clouds, the stars
Were muffled deep ; and not one ray, below,
O'er all *Mycenæ* glimmer'd, or around it.
When strait, at farthest east, a ruddy light
Sprung up, and wide-encreasing, roll'd along ;
By turns diminish'd, and by turns renew'd,
A wave of fire : at last, it flam'd, confess'd,
From isle to isle, and beachy point to point :
Till the last blaze at *Nauplia* ended, plain.
A glorious fight ! and as a *Greek* rejoic'd me.

Clyt. How fits the wind ?

Man. It blows from *Troy*, direct ;
A bold and steady gale.

Clyt. 'Tis well. Retire.
Your care and faithful pains shall be rewarded.

S C E N E III.

CLYTEMNESTRA, *her* ATTENDANT.

Clyt. He comes ! he comes ! the hapless victor
comes !

Ev'n now his trophy'd vessel streaks the main,]
And ploughs the billows with triumphant prow ;
Or by glad crowds receiv'd, perhaps, he hails
His native shore, and presses on to shame.

Ev'n now with glory charg'd, with conquest gay,
Crown'd with the laurels of ten famous years,
He dreams to join them to the peaceful olive;
And, after rugged toils and perilous war,
Soft to repose him on the myrtle bed
Of calm domestic bliss. How vain the hopes!
How short the prospect of believing man!
I dare not look before me, dare not paint
The rising storm.

Attend. Behold, Egisthus, Madam.

Clyt. Leave me.

SCENE IV.

CLYTEMNESTRA, EGISTHUS.

Egist. (after some silence.) And is it thus, O Cly-
temnestra,

Thus that, in hours of danger, lovers meet?

[*Pausing.*

Still coldly silent, still the look averted,
Where not one softness glows? While anger, fear,
Disgust, and sick repentance, shifting, cloud
Your vary'd cheek. 'Tis plain you never lov'd.

Clyt. Oh that I never had!

Egist. You never did.

The very power to wish it proves you did not.

Clyt. He ne'er deserv'd my love, who dares suspect
it.

Egist. Not to suspect it weakness were and folly.

Clyt. Nor only doubt; believe your doubts.

Egist. I do.

Clyt. You do!

Egist. Nay more, am of their truth assur'd.

Clyt. 'Tis base, ungrateful, an ungenerous insult,
To tell me this. Urge not too far, *Egistbus*,
Urge not too far my guilt-dejected spirit.
Tho' you have trampled on my haughty virtue,
That noble pride of soul, which knows no fear,
And bears no insult; yet to you, at least,
To you of all mankind, I will be bold,
As I had never err'd, will be a queen,
The blood of *Jove*, be *Clytemnestra* still.

Egist. Be temperate, Madam: I have told you
nothing,
But that I am not worthy of your love.

Clyt. Curse on that pride! which, with affected
brow,

Humility conceals. And am I then so vile,
So lost to reason, honour, common honour;
As without love, that all-compelling fury,
Without debasing, thoughtless, blind, blind love;
To bow me from the height of happy life,
To this low fearful state of coward shame?
Mistake me not—I would not waste one word.
One passing word, affronted thus to save you
From jealousy's worst rage! did not, alas!
A kind of mournful justice to myself
Tear from my swelling heart the mean confession.
How art thou fall'n! to what dishonour fall'n!
Unhappy *Clytemnestra*!

Egist. Harsh construction!

And yet these frowns delight, that anger charms me.

O more than lovely! O majestic fair-one!

Since you then know the jealous force of love,

Forgive

Forgive its tender fears, its fond offence ;
Offence I could not mean.

Clyt. I'll-fated she !

Who must forgive.

Egist. Nay rather cast me from you,
Than thus upbraid me with so forc'd a pardon.

O *Clytemnestra* ! where are now those looks,
Those looks of smiling heaven, of radiant sweetness,
That wak'd our morn of love ? Within whose sphere,
No evil durst approach, no sadness dwell ;
While the charm'd gazer knew nor fear nor danger ?
And set they then at last in gloomy quarrels !
Let us not quarrel. Why should lovers quarrel !
Life is for that too short, too precious time ;
These moments chiefly, these impetuous moments,
That to the brink of ruin seem to roll
Our mingled fate. Even now—

Clyt. 'Tis true ! 'Tis true !

Alas ! methinks, in every hollow blast,
That shakes this palace, *Agamemnon* comes.
Yes, yes, *Egisthus*, still a proof remains,
A matchless proof of love, I mean to give you.
Glad will I throw this regal pomp aside,
And instant with you seek some distant country,
Some gloomy *Thracian* dale, where piny *Hemus*
May wrap us in impenetrable shade :
There, there, the coarsest life, fed by hard toil,
Will be luxurious ease to what I feel,
To this big pang that labours at my heart,
And fires my mingling passions into anguish.
Quick ! let us fly, *Egisthus*, fly this moment !
The next may seize us, bind us down to shame,
Detested shame !

Egist. What ! *Clytemnestra* ! fly !
That is indeed the road direct to shame,

To infamy for ever. He who flies,
 In war or peace, who his great purpose yields,
 He is the only villain of this world :
 But he who labours firm and gains his point,
 Be what it will which crowns him with success,
 He is the son of fortune and of fame,
 By those admir'd, those specious villains most,
 That else had bellow'd out reproach against him.

Besides, your husband, your vain-glorious husband,
 Proud *Agamemnon*, who ten years has warr'd
 At *Troy*, to scourge your sister *Helen's* rape,
 Dream you that he would not pursue our flight,
 Tho' we took shelter in *Cimmerian* shades,
 And drag us back, the scorn of hissing *Greece*,
 To then deserv'd, to true, unpity'd shame.

Clyt. Excuse my weaker heart. But how, *Egisthus*,
 How shall I bear an injur'd husband's eye ?
 The fiercest foe wears not a look so dreadful,
 As does the man we wrong.

Egist. Madam, your fears
 Cast a false glare upon your troubled reason,
 That blinds it quite.—An injur'd husband he !
 He wrong'd ! No, *Clytemnestra* never, never,
 Can never wrong her tyrant *Agamemnon*,
 Tyrant of common *Greece* ; can never wrong
 The man who leaves her ten regardless years,
 For the vain honours of a foolish war ;
 Nay, who consum'd those years, if Fame speaks true,
 In nothing less than war ; instead of war,
 In shameful squabbles with his nobler friends,
 About their captive females, training out
 An amorous revel rather than a war,
 Far from his country, family, and queen.

And

And can you wrong this false one? Think of *Aulis*.
 How basely to that port you was betray'd,
 And what dire nuptials waited there your daughter.
 Think with what price he bought his cruel trophies,
 Behold the first-born blossom of your youth,
 Your *Iphigenia*, her mild eyes dejected,
 Her cheek o'ercast with fear, her bosom bare,
 An helpless, harmless, uncomplaining victim,
 Stabb'd by the murderous *Calchas*; whilst her father,
 Her unrelenting father, to protect
 The sacrifice, stands by. Behold, she bleeds,
 Pours the rich stream she drew from that fair bosom,
 Falls like a drooping flower untimely cut;
 And all to purchase for her sire's impatience,
 From some fell demon that bely'd *Diana*,
 A rising gale. The gale begins to blow,
 The pendants flutter; when away he goes,
 Gayly he goes, and leaves a wretched mother,
 To weep her murder'd child.—If yet one spark
 Of wonted spirit burns in *Clytemnestra*,
 If she still lives to justice and to nature;
 These, these are wrongs, that call aloud for ven-
 geance;

And there are hands that boldly—start not, Madam—
 That will with pride avenge you.

Clyt. Ha! what hands?

What vengeance, say? Touch not so wild a string;
 It wakes new discord in my jarring soul.
 To the just gods, not us, pertaineth vengeance.
 I cannot, will not e'er consent to—Gods!
 Where roves my tongue?—You did not mention that,
 You did not mean it sure—O spare, *Egisthus*,
 In pity spare my last remains of virtue!

Oh make me not beyond recovery vile !
 A horror to myself !—How wretched they,
 Who feel, yet cannot save, their dying virtue !

[*A shout heard.*

What means this transport of the mad'ning people ?
 Oh my presaging heart !—Save me !—Again !
 Ah, little think they how their joy distracts me !

Egist. Some move this way—Resume your temper, Madam.

SCENE V.

To CLYTEMNESTRA an OFFICER belonging to the Court.

Officer. Madam, the king is near, from *Nauplia* comes ;

But such rejoicing crowds around him throng,
 As makes his journey flow. Just now arriv'd,
Talthybius brings the news, and craves admittance.
Clyt. Conduct him hither.

SCENE VI.

CLYTEMNESTRA alone.

Oh too faithful signal !
 Now must I take another step in vice.

Down

Down stubborn heart, and learn diffimulation :
 Yes, learn to smile, tho' sorrow wrap thee round ;
 Learn to be friends with baseness.—See ! how gay
 This herald strides along ! Mistaken man !

S C E N E VII.

CLYTEMNESTRA, TALTHYBIUS, *with some*
Grecian Soldiers that attend him.

Clyt. Welcome *Talthybius* ; welcome, ye brave
Greeks.

How fares the King ?

Talb. Madam, the king is well ;
 Health, happiness, and glory, join to crown him.
 His heart, impatient to confer with yours,
 Sends me before him with its warmest wishes,
 Its warmest gratulations. “ Tell,” he said,
 “ Go tell my *Clytemnestra*, that the thoughts
 “ Of meeting her awake a dearer joy
 “ Than conquest ever gave : ev'n tedious seems
 “ My people's love, that loses me a moment.”

This crown, which circled once the royal brows
 Of *Hecuba*, of *Priam's* lofty queen,
 He prays you to accept.

Clyt. There set it down.
 I own, *Talthybius*, the soft moisture fills
 My womanish eyes, while on the sudden turns
 Of Fate I think, on Fortune's sad reverses.
 Oft when blind mortals think themselves secure,
 In height of bliss, they touch the brink of ruin.
 But sure your voyage has been wond'rous quick,
 Not three full days.—Is all the fleet return'd ?

Talb. No, Madam; none, except this single ship,
Which bore the king: the rest are scatter'd wide.

When to the joyous breeze we spread our sails,
And left that bay, where *Simois* and *Scamander*
Mix with the rapid *Hellepont*; while *Troy*,
Or what was *Troy*, yet wreathing smook to heaven,
And *Ida's* woody top, receding, sunk
Beneath the trembling main, the sky was fair;
And, wing'd our course with slender airs, we sail'd,
Till strait, as evening fell, the fluttering gale,
Encreasing gradual from the red north-east,
Blew stiff and fierce. At last the tempest howl'd.
Next morning, nought but angry seas and skies
Appear'd, conflicting, round. Meantime, right on,
Our strong-ribb'd vessel drove before the blast,
That, falling somewhat off its fury, gave us
A quick auspicious voyage. Safe, we pass'd
The *Cyclad* isles, that, o'er the troubled deep,
Seem'd then to float amidst the mingling storm.
Only at one, with much ado, we touch'd,
Nor without risque.

Clyt. And why?

Talb. Madam, compell'd
By sacred pity. On the foaming beach,
A miserable figure beck'ning flood,
Horrid and wild, with famine worn away.
His plaintive voice, half by the murmuring surge
Absorpt, just reach'd our ears. In *Greek* he call'd,
And strong adjur'd us by the gentle gods,
That make the wretched their peculiar care,
To bear him thence, from savage solitude,
Into the chearful haunts of men again.

Clyt. What?—Of condition look'd he?

Talb.

Talb. So he seem'd;
Tho' dimm'd by helpless solitary life.
The king regards him much—Forgive me, Madam;
I see the rueful image but disturbs
Your generous soul.

Clyt. I thank you, good *Talbybius*;
And from the king himself will learn the rest.
This ring, on which a victory is carv'd
With curious art, befits the news you bring.
I am your debtor still; and, soldiers, yours.

The End of the First Act.

ACT II. SCENE I.

CLYTEMNESTRA, ATTENDANT.

Clyt. **A**Rriv'd so soon! I am not half prepar'd:
My features all are sunk with conscious
shame;

My eyes are yet too tender to dissemble.

Atten. Madam, be firm. Wipe off these gloomy
tears,

In which too plain is read your troubled soul.

Just now the trumpet spoke the king's approach.

Clyt. 'Tis come, at last, the trying hour is come!
Oh that my heart were hard, and features false!—
Again these trumpets swell ——

Atten. A moment, Madam,
A moment will betray you.

Clyt. Open, earth,
And swallow up my shame!—What can I do?
Where look? what say? confusion! torture!

Atten. Madam.—

Clyt. Ah, coward that I am! Was there no dagger,
To save this ten-fold death?

Atten. Hark! loud and near,
The triumph comes.

Clyt. Well—give me breath—

[*Endeavouring to compose her agitation.*]

Agamem. A moment, [Behind the Scenes.
Leave me, my friends.

Clyt. Ha! heard you not his voice?
Yes, yes, 'tis he! Go bring my children hither:
They may relieve me.

Atten. O remember!

Clyt. Heavens!

SCENE II.

AGAMEMNON, CLYTEMNESTRA.

Agamem. Where is my life! my love! my
Clytemnestra!

O let me press thee to my fluttering soul,
That is on wing to mix itself with thine!
O thou, for whom I live, for whom I conquer,
Than glory brighter! O my *Clytemnestra!*
Now, in this dear embrace, I lose the toils
Of ten years war; absence, with all its pains,
Is by this charming moment wip'd away.
All-bounteous gods! Sure, never was a heart
So full, so blest as mine.— [*Discovering her disorder.*
But

But whence, my fairest !

What mean these tears ?—Not tears of happy love,
Such as I shed.—What means that clouded look,
Whose downcast sweetness will not shine upon me ?
Why this cold meeting ? Why unkindly damp'd
My ardor thus ? Oh speak, my *Clytemnestra* !

Clyt. Forgive me, *Agamemnon* ; but I cannot,
Alas ! I cannot see your face again,
Without reflecting where I saw you last.
Aulis is present to my eyes anew,
The ships, the chiefs, the guards, the bloody *Calchas*,
All the dire pomp of sacrifice around :
Anew my daughter bleeds, basely deceiv'd !
And when I see that awful brow, that doom'd her,
Can *Agamemnon* wonder at my tears !

Agamem. Why will my *Clytemnestra* add new stings
To what here rankles but too deep already ?
Ah ! why impute to me the work of Fate ?
'Tis not indulging private inclination,
The selfish passions, that sustains the world,
And lends its rulers grace ; no, 'tis not thence
That glory springs, and high immortal deeds :
The public good, the good of others, still
Must bare fond nature down, in him who dares
Aspire to worthy rule ; imperious honour
Still o'er the most distinguish'd lords it most.
Was it for me ?—Let ev'n your passions judge—
For *Agamemnon* was it, when ordain'd,
By common voice, the general of the *Greeks* ;
While twenty kings beneath my banner march'd ;
And while around me full-assembled *Greece*,
Indignant, kindled at your sister's rape,
On her old native foe demanding vengeance
On faithless *Asia* : Was it then for me,

To

To quench this glorious flame? And to refuse
 One life to thousands, to those generous thousands,
 That for my honour, for the dearer honour
 Of *Clytemnestra's* family, stood all
 Prepar'd to die? If to the mingled voice,
 Of honour, duty, glory, public good,
 Of the commanding gods, I had been deaf;
 And, in the feeble father, poorly sunk
 The *Greek*, the chief, the patriot, and the king,
 Greater than king, the general of the *Greeks*;
 Then you yourself, my *Clytemnestra's* self,
 Must (let her heart avow the truth) have scorn'd me,
 Nor think it was an easy resignation.
 Oh *Clytemnestra*! Had you seen within,
 What here within my tortur'd bosom pass'd;
 To that my battles since were only sport.
 No, not the kindest mother, bath'd in tears,
 As o'er her agonizing babe she hangs,
 Feels what I suffer'd then—You may remember—
 Again the father melts me at the thought—
 You may remember how I hid my face;
 Asham'd to let the *Greeks* around behold
 The tears, that misbecame their general's cheek.
 Then cease to blame what rather merits pity,
 I might add praise.—He, who the father's heart
 More tender has than mine, too tender has it.
 I love my children, as a father should;
 Besides, I love them from a foster cause,
 I love my *Clytemnestra*.

Clyt. Had, alas!

Had *Agamemnon* lov'd me, would he, nay,
 Could he have left me in the rage of grief,
 My daughter yet fresh bleeding in my sight?
 Left me so long? Love surely must have found,

In

AGAMEMNON. 111

In the wide round of ten revolving years,
Some way to see me, to prevent these sorrows—
Why was I thus abandon'd, *Agamemnon*?

Agamem. Let me kiss off these tears. O beauteous
tears!

If shed by doubting love, if shed for absence.
Instead of these reproaches, ask me rather,
How I that absence bore: and here all words,
All eloquence is dumb, to speak the pangs,
That lurk'd beneath the rugged brow of war.
When glaring day was clos'd, and hush'd the camp,
Oh! then, amid ten thousand other cares,
Those stung the keenest that remember'd thee,
That on my long-left *Clytemnestra* thought,
On what wild seas and mountains lay between us.

Clyt. Unhappy man!

Agamem. What says my *Clytemnestra*?

Clyt. Unhappy mortals! by vain words deceiv'd,
To their own pride, to joyless honour slaves.

Agamem. He, he alone, can claim a right to bliss,
Who has fulfill'd the painful task of honour.

Clyt. But what avails a right to vanish'd bliss?

Agamem. Let me once more adjure thee,

Clytemnestra,

By every tender name of love adjure thee,
To lose in kind oblivion these our past—
I would not call them quarrels—Ah! there was,
There was a time—I will indulge the thought—
When everlasting transport tun'd our souls:
When, join'd to vernal life, the spring of love
Around us gayly blow'd! and heaven and earth,
All smiling nature look'd delighted on.
Yet, would my *Clytemnestra* lend her aid,
I know a passion still more deeply charming

Than

Than fever'd youth e'er felt; and that is love,
 By long experience mellow'd into friendship.
 How far beyond that froward child of fancy!
 With beauty pleas'd a while, anon disgusted,
 Seeking some other toy; how far more noble
 Is this bright offspring of unchanging reason,
 That fonder grows with age, and charms for ever!

It is not often, *Clytemnestra*, thus,
 That I submit to double my intreaties;
 But, oh destroy not the collected hopes
 Of life and love! Oh make not conquest hateful!
 I shall abhor it, if it cost me thee,
 Cost me thy love. A daughter was too much,
 And ten years absence from my *Clytemnestra*.
 Add not to these a loss I cannot bear,
 The loss of thee, thou loveliest of thy sex!
 And once the kindest!

Clyt. Oh!

Agamem. Turn not away;
 There is relenting goodness in thy look.

Clyt. Alas! untimely fondness—*Agamemnon*!
 Too generous *Agamemnon*! you distress me.
 Would you were not so kind, so tender, now!
 Or ne'er had been so cruel!

Agamem. 'Tis unjust
 To call me cruel. Fate, the Gods, our fortune,
 Were cruel to us both—What could I more
 To soothe our parting woes, and ease my absence?
 I left you *Melissander* to advise you,
 Left you the wisest, faithfullest, and best—
 Oh whispering nature! Are not these my children?

SCENE

SCENE III.

AGAMEMNON, CLYTEMNESTRA, ELECTRA,
ORESTES.

Agamem. My daughter! my *Electra*!

Elect. O my father!

Agamem. Come to my arms, my boy! my dear
Orestes!

In whom I live anew, my younger self!
And thou, *Electra*; in thy opening cheek
I mark thy mother's bloom: ev'n so she look'd,
Such the mild light with which her beauty dawn'd.
Oh thou soft image of my *Clytemnestra*!
My other *Iphigenia*!

Elect. Oh my father!

My joy! my pride! my glory! whom, in dreams,
I oft have seen, as if return'd from *Troy*;
But still unwelcome morning, with a tear,
Wip'd out the dear illusion of the night.
And is it then no more a faithless vision?
Oh, 'tis my father! whose departure hence,
And *Iphigenia's* death, I just remember.
How glorious, *Iphigenia*, was thy death!
A death I envy rather than lament.
Who would not die to gain immortal fame,
Deliver *Greece*, and crown a father's glory?

Agamem. Come to my arms again, my generous
daughter!

And thou my son! O that thy tender years
Had suffer'd thee to share our toils at *Troy*!
'Tis war that forms the prince: 'tis hardship, toil;
'Tis sleepless nights, and never-resting days;

'Tis

'Tis pain, 'tis danger, 'tis affronted death :
 'Tis equal fate for all, and changing fortune ;
 That rear the mind to glory, that inspire
 The noblest virtues and the gentlest manners.
 Where shall I find, to teach thee these, *Orestes*,
 Another *Troy* ?

Orest. How happy had I been,
 To have beheld what I must only hear !
 But I will hear it often, every day ;
 Will learn your story, study your example ;
 Will try to mix your virtues with your blood,
 And not disgrace the laurels I inherit.
 My bosom flutters with I know not what—
 —Forgive me, Sir, I am too young to say it—
 But something here I feel, which bids me hope
 That I shall not betray my father's honour.

Agamem. Son of my soul!—Look here, my
Clytemnestra!

Look here and weep with tendernefs and transport !
 What is all tasteless luxury to this ?
 To these best joys, which holy love bestows ?
 O Nature ! parent Nature ! thou alone,
 Art the true judge of what can make us happy !

Enter an Officer belonging to the Court.

Officer. *Egisthus*, Sir, attends.

Agamem. Go, bid him enter.
 Retire, my *Clytemnestra*, my dear children :
 We soon shall meet again, 'till then farewell.

SCENE IV.

Agamem. Obey me, features, for one supple
 moment :

You shall not long be tortur'd. Here, in courts,
 We

We must not wear the soldier's honest face.
He little thinks I have him in the snare
Of *Melifander*, whom, in my return,
I from that desert island chanc'd to save,
To which the ruffian —

SCENE V.

AGAMEMNON, EGISTHUS.

Egist. Health to *Agamemnon*!
And happiness responsive to his glory!

Agamem. Cousin, I greet you well.

Egist. Forgive me, Sir.
You have surpriz'd us with this quick return:
For by that signal, whose illustrious flame
Rejoic'd all *Greece*, we did not hope your presence
These three days hence. Forgive, that, unprepar'd,
We only with that joy, that loyal transport,
Which swell each *Grecian* bosom, thus receive you.
And truly such a burst I have not seen
Of that best triumph. City, country, all,
Is in a gay triumphant tempest tost.
I scarce could press along. The trumpet's voice
Is lost in loud repeated shouts that raise
Your name to heaven. Ten thousand eyes, below,
Ake to behold the conqueror of *Troy*.

Agamem. The noblest praise that can salute my
ear,
The sweetest music, is my people's joy.
But sure your tongue has done it ample justice;
Trust me, you blazon a description well.

I have

I have not heard so much obliging speech
These many years.

Egist. Misconstrue not my zeal :
On the full heart obedient language waits.
I feel so deep your glory, *Agamemnon*,
As mingles with my joy a sort of passion,
That almost touches envy. O ye gods !
Has, while I liv'd, a war, the most renown'd
Which any age e'er saw, or shall again
Be seen ; a war, whose never-dying fame
Will cover earth, and reach remotest time ;
Has such a war adorn'd my days, and I
Not shar'd its glory ? Pining here, unknown,
In nameless peace—how have I lost my life ?

Agamem. This ardor is the mode. But know,

Egistbus,
That ruling a free people well in peace,
Without or yielding or usurping power ;
Maintaining firm the honour of the laws,
Yet sometimes softening their too rigid doom,
As mercy may require, steering the state,
Thro' factious storms, or the more dangerous calms
Of peace, by long continuance grown corrupt ;
Besides the fair career which Fortune opens
To the mild glories of protected arts,
To bounty, to beneficence, to deeds
That give the gods themselves their brightest beams :
Yes, know, that these are in true glory equal,
If not superior, to deluding conquest :
Nor less demand they conduct, courage, care,
And persevering toil.

Egist. Say thankless toil,
Harsh and unpleasing ; that, instead of praise
And due reward, meets oftner scorn, reproach,

Fierce

Fierce opposition to the clearest measures ;
Injustice, banishment, or death itself ;
Such is the nature of malignant man.
Not so the victor's meed : him all approve,
Him all admire.

Agamem. Yet tho' a toilsome task,
Tho' an ungrateful labour oft to rule ;
I not so hardly of mankind, *Egisthus*,
Presume to judge. Truth, wisdom, courage, justice,
Beneficence, and for the public good
A constant tenor of well-laid designs,
Must still be awful in the worst of times,
Be amiable, dear ; while worth, at last,
Will light up worth, and virtue kindle virtue.]
You was however eas'd of half the toil,
By him I left to counsel *Clytemnestra*,
By *Melisander*.

Egist. Would to Heaven I had !

Agamem. You much amaze me. — Is not

Melisander

Wife, just, and faithful ?

Egist. Sir, I must confess
He wore a specious mask——

Agamem. Beware, *Egisthus* ;
I know his stedfast worth, and will not bear
The farthest hint that stains the man I love.

Egist. Then, urg'd by truth and in my own
defence,
I boldly will assert him, *Agamemnon*,
To be more apt to trouble and embroil,
Than serve a state. A certain stubborn virtue,
I would say affectation of blunt virtue,
Beneath whose outside froth, fermenting lay
Pride, envy, faction, turbulence of soul ;

And democratic views, in some sort made him
 A secret traitor, equally unfit
 Or to obey or rule. But that I check'd
 His early treasons, here at your return,
 You might have found your kingdom a republic.

Agamem. O I shall lose all patience— [*Aside.*

You do well,

To give your accusation open speech.
 Meantime, remember you must fully prove it,
 You must!—And he who *Melissander* proves
 The wretch you have describ'd, proves man is vain,
 And saps the broad foundations of all trust.
 I know he would not patiently look on,
 And suffer ill designs to gather strength,
 Awaiting gentle seasons; yes, I know,
 He had a troublesome old-fashion'd way
 Of shocking courtly ears with horrid truth.
 He was no civil ruffian; none of those,
 Who lye with twisted looks, betray with shrugs—
 I wax too warm—But he was none of those,
 Is none of those dust-licking, reptile, close,
 Insinuating, speckled, smooth court-serpents,
 That make it so unsafe, chiefly for kings,
 To walk this weedy world—Pardon my heat—
 I wander from the purpose—You, *Egisthus*,
 Must prove your charge, to *Melissander's* face
 Must prove it.

Egist. Surely—Since the princely faith
 Of your own blood you doubt—

Agamem. Friendship and truth
 Are more a-kin to me than blood.

Egist. You shall,
 You shall have proof; but to his face you cannot.

Agamem. But to his face I will!—I cannot! why?

Egist.

Egist. He wanders far from hence, I know not
where :

For when I found him an undoubted traitor,
Tho' he the heaviest punishment deserv'd ;
Yet in regard to that esteem, which, once,
You deign'd to bear him, banishment alone
Was all I did inflict.

Agamem. I thank you, [Sir—
O you are wondrous good !—But tell me, how,
How durst you meddle in the sphere assign'd
To *Clytemnestra*? He was left to her ;
To be her counsellor I left my friend,
Left *Melifander* ; left a man, whom long,
Whom well I knew ; perhaps, to check you, left him :
And you pretend, you !—But I will be calm—
These passions in a king to his inferiors,
Who cannot answer equal, are not comely.
Forgive my transport—A more quiet hour
Shall sift this matter to the bottom, shall
Do *Melifander* or *Egisthus* justice.

SCENE VI.

EGISTHUS.

Now go thy way, weak open-hearted man,
Thus to declare the ruin thou intendest.
Go, rate thy *Trojan* slaves ; and elsewhere practise
This insolence of camps. Tame as I seem,
Submissive, mild, and patient of thy threats ;
Yet, ere to-morrow's sun beholds *Mycenæ*,

My

My sure-aim'd blow shall pierce thy swelling heart,
 And cool this tyrant fever in thy veins.
 Were not our blood, our kindred blood at variance,
 And therefore burning with immortal hate ;
 Had not thy father *Atræus*, at a banquet,
 A dreadful banquet ! from whose sight the sun
 Turn'd back eclips'd, serv'd—Monstrous!—up to
 mine,

To his own brother, to the pale *Thyestes*,
 His murder'd sons : didst thou not wear a crown
 Then by thy father ravish'd from our line,
Mycenæ's crown, which he unjustly seiz'd,
 And added to his own, to that of *Argos* :
 Had I not stain'd thy bed with *Clytemnestra* :
 Tho' safety did not urge, and self-defence :
 Yet this vile treatment, treatment fit for slaves ;
 Thanks to thy fury ! this has fix'd thy doom.
 Some foolish scruples, that still hung about me,
 Are by this friendly tempest blown away. —

But *Clytemnestra* comes. How shall I calm
 Her troubled mind ? How bring her to my purpose ?

S C E N E VII.

CLYTEMNESTRA, EGISTHUS.

Clyt. Here let me kneel, *Egisthus*, grasp thy
 knees ;
 Here let me grow till my request be granted.
 Now is the very crisis of my fate.

Egist.

Egist. What sight is this I see? Rise, *Clytemnestra*!
Thou fairest, most majestic of thy sex!
It misbecomes thee much this suppliant posture.
O there is nothing, nothing, sure, which you
Need stoop to ask! Speak, and command it, Madam.

Clyt. Then let us henceforth be, as if this love
Had never been betwixt us.

Egist. Cease to love thee!
What wild demand! Impossible!—Even now,
Endear'd by danger, by distress endear'd,
I for thee feel a fonder pang than e'er
I felt before.

Clyt. No! these deluding words
Can charm no longer; their enchantment flies;
And in my breast the guilty passions jar
Unkind, unjoyous, unharmonious all.
Ah me! from real happiness we stray,
By vice bewilder'd; vice, which always leads,
However fair at first, to wilds of woe.

Egist. Ah! *Clytemnestra*! didst thou love——

Clyt. No more!
Seduce my soul no more! Here will I stop——
Beyond this line 'tis misery, 'tis madness.
The Furies flash their torches, vultures tear,
The mingled tortures of the damn'd await me.
Oh! if your passion be not merely selfish,
If the least tenderness for me you feel,
Drive me no farther down the gulph of woe!
To happiness I bid a last farewell:
I ask not happiness: no, that I leave
To innocence and virtue; peace, alone,
Some poor remains of peace is all I ask,
Not to be greatly wretched, plung'd in horrors!
And yet, who knows, the heavenly spark, that sleeps

VOL. II.

G

Beneath

Beneath these embers, yet may spread anew
 Its chearful lustre—All may yet be well—
 For *Agamemnon* was so kind, so gentle,
 With such a holy tender flame he burn'd,
 As might have kindled in a barbarous breast
 Humanity and virtue.

Egist. All pretence.

I guess his aim! I penetrate his purpose.
 On you he lavish'd fondness, while on me
 He lowr'd destruction. Doubtless, with his ear,
 Some villain has been busy; and he means
 First to divide us; then, with greater ease,
 To ruin both—And can you then be caught,
 Caught with the common prostituted speeches,
 That oft have sicken'd on the glowing lip
 Of many a *Trojan* slave? *Chryseis* had them;
Briseis too; and now *Cassandra*, she,
 Who, more like a triumphant queen than captive,
 Is every hour expected—

Clyt. What *Cassandra*?

Egist. O it imports you little what *Cassandra*!
 Thus poorly tame, you ne'er will want *Cassandras*.
 What is become of *Clytemnestra's* spirit,
 That she can thus forget her high descent,
 Forget her rank, her honour, nay forget
 Her injuries?

Clyt. But what *Cassandra*, say?

Egist. Why *Priam's* daughter, the prophetic princess,

The proud, the young, the beautiful *Cassandra*:
 So vain of heart, she dreamt *Apollo* lov'd her,
 And, on her plighted faith to crown his love,
 Bestow'd the gift of prophecy; the gift
 In her possession, she deceiv'd the god:

Whence

Whence he, provok'd, with this condition dash'd it,
Of never gaining credit. So the tale,
The fable runs—Yet, on my soul, I think,
Did she give out she would be queen of *Argos*,
Sne were indeed a prophetess.

Clyt. 'Tis well.

You mean it for an insult this, you do.
What else could tempt you to deride me, Sir,
With such extravagance!

Egist. Mistake me not,
I mean it, Madam, for a serious truth;
I mean it for a certainty, if thus
You droop, unnerv'd with these dejecting fears.

Clyt. Cassandra, queen of Argos!

Egist. Yes, of *Argos*;
While *Clytemnestra* in a prison pines,
Where she may weep, and moralize at leisure.

Clyt. By Heavens! she visits first her father's shade.

Egist. There shone your native self. Let bright
revenge,

I should say justice, dissipate these clouds,
These melancholy whims of ill-judg'd virtue,
And shew you burning with your former lustre.
Madam, our fates are blended: know, we stand
Or fall together. Shame, contempt, and ruin,
Or safety, love, and glory, is our choice:
And can we doubt a moment?

Clyt. But *Egisthus*—

Egist. I know the purpose of thy pleading eye.
Of that hereafter—We shall meet again—
My presence now is wanted in the city.
Fear nothing—Thou shalt know before we act,
Thou, for whose sake alone I act and live!

The End of the Second Act.

ACT III. SCENE I.

ARCAS, MELISANDER.

Arcas. **A**ND have I found my long-lost friend
again?

My Melisander! But so chang'd, your look,
So sickly'd with a kind of thoughtful sadness,
So sunk each feature, by seven drooping years
Spent in that desert isle, has baffled quite
My wandering recollection.

Melis. True, dear *Arcas* :
For what a helpless creature, by himself,
Is the proud lord of this inferior world,
Vain feeble man ! The commoners of nature,
Each wing that flits along the spacious sky,
Is less dependant than their boasting master.

Hail, social life ! into thy pleasing bounds
Again I come to pay the common stock,
My share of service : and, in glad return,
To taste thy comforts, thy protected joys.

Arcas. O greatly welcome ! you deserve them well,
You well deserve the social life you polish.
Still on my thought your strange delivery dwells.
By *Agamemnon* left to aid the queen,
With faithful counsel, while he warr'd at *Troy* ;

And

And thus by *Agamemnon* to be sav'd,
 Returning from that conquest! wondrous chance!
 Or rather wondrous conduct of the gods!
 By mortals, from their blindness, chance misnam'd.
 Meantime, instruct me, while the king reposes,
 How was you snatch'd away? and how, so long,
 Could you this dreadful solitude support?
 I burn to know the whole.

Melis. 'Tis thus, my friend.

While sunk in unsuspecting sleep I lay,
 Some midnight ruffians rush'd into my chamber,
 Sent by *Egisthus*, who my presence deem'd
 Obstructive (so I solve it) to his views;
 Black views I fear, as you perhaps may know.
 Sudden they seiz'd, and, muffled up in darkness,
 Strait bore me to the sea, whose instant prey
 I did conclude myself, when first, around
 The ship unmoor'd, I heard the chiding wave.
 But these fell tools of cruel power, it seems,
 Had orders in a desert isle to leave me;
 There, hopeless, helpless, comfortless, to prove
 The utmost gall and bitterness of death.
 Thus malice often overshoots itself,
 And some unguarded accident betrays
 The man of blood.—Next night—a dreary night!
 Cast on the wildest of the *Cyclad Isles*,
 Where never human foot had mark'd the shore,
 These ruffians left me—Yet believe me, *Arcas*,
 Such is the rooted love we bear mankind,
 All ruffians as they were, I never heard
 A sound so dismal as their parting oars.—
 Then horrid silence follow'd, broke alone
 By the low murmurs of the restless deep,

Mixt with the doubtful breeze, that now and then
 Sigh'd thro' the mournful woods. Beneath a shade
 I sat me down, more heavily oppress'd,
 More desolate at heart, than e'er I felt
 Before. When *Philomela*, o'er my head,
 Began to tune her melancholy strain,
 As piteous of my woes; till, by degrees,
 Composing sleep on wounded nature shed
 A kind but short relief. At early morn,
 Wak'd by the chaunt of birds, I look'd around
 For usual objects. Objects found I none,
 Except before me stretch'd the toiling main,
 And rocks and woods, in savage view, behind.
 Wrapt for a moment in amaz'd confusion,
 My thought turn'd giddy round; when, all at once,
 To memory full my dire condition rush'd.

Arcas. But of each comfort, each convenience void,
 How could you life sustain! how fence against
 Inclement skies?

Melissus. A mossy cave, that fac'd
 The southern sea, and in whose deep recess
 Boil'd up a crystal fountain, was my home.
 Herbs were my food, those blessed stores of health!
 Only when winter, from my daily search,
 Withdrew my verdant meal, I was oblig'd
 In faithless snares to seize, which truly griev'd me,
 My sylvan friends; that ne'er till then had known,
 And therefore dreaded less, the tyrant man.

But these low hardships scarce deserve regard:
 The pangs, that sharpest stung, were in my mind;
 There desolation reign'd; and there, cut off
 From social life, I felt a constant death.
 And yet these pangs at last forgot to throb:
 What cannot lenient gentle time perform!

I ate

I ate my lonely meal without a tear ;
 Nor sigh'd to see the dreadful night descend.
 In my own breast, a world within myself,
 In streams, in groves, in sunny hill and shade ;
 In all that blooms with vegetable life,
 Or joys with kindred animal sensation ;
 In the full-peopled round of azure heaven ;
 Whene'er I, studious, look'd, I found companions.
 But, chief, the Muses lent their soft'ning aid.
 At their enchanting voice my sorrows fled,
 Or learn'd to please ; while, thro' my troubled heart,
 They breath'd the soul of harmony anew.
 Thus of the great community of Nature
 A denizen I liv'd ; and oft, in hymns,
 And rapturous thought, ev'n with the Gods convers'd,
 That not disdain sometimes the walks of man.

So pass'd the time ; when lo ! within my call,
 Arriv'd the ship, which hope had often promis'd—
 The ship !—O, it surpass'd my fondest dream,
 E'er to imagine the gay ship that came !
 As on the deck I *Agamemnon* saw,
 All-glorious with the spoils of conquer'd *Troy* ;
 Ye gods ! what transport, what amazement seiz'd me !
 What adoration of your wondrous ways !
 Expression sinks beneath them.

Arcas. Sweet reward
 Of manly patience ! that, to fortune still
 Superior, scorns despair.

Meliss. This theme, my friend,
 Will better suit a leisure hour ; but now
 The high concerns of life demand our care.

I have already to the king imparted
 Suspicions of *Egisthus*, and remain

In this disguise, not to alarm his guilt,
Till it more full appear, and proper steps
To punish his misgovernment be taken.
If he has ill designs, you, *Arcas*, you
Must, while you seem'd regardless, have discern'd
them.

Your calm but keen inspection, not disturb'd
By the vain flutter of ill-tim'd discourse,
Must reach the very bottom of his purpose.
In you the king confides, of you demands,
As of his best-lov'd subject in *Mycenæ*,
The truth.

Arcas, O, I have precious truths in store!
And that best treasure will unlock before him.
Long has my silent observation trac'd
Egisthus thro' the doubling maze of treason;
But now his ill designs are too too plain,
To all *Mycenæ* plain; and who, indeed,
Who can have good ones that corrupts a people?
It was, however, hard, a bitter task!
To wink at public villainy, to wipe
Each honest passion from my livid face,
To bind my hands, and seal my quivering lips,
While my heart burn'd with rage, and treasur'd up
A storm of indignation——

Melis. Give it way!

O, 'tis a glorious luxury! Oppress'd,
For years, beneath a load of wicked power,
To heave it off indignant, and assert
The dear, dear freedom of a virtuous mind.
Curse on the coward or perfidious tongue,
That dares not, ev'n to kings, avow the truth!
Let traitors wrap them in delusive incense;

On

On flattery, flattery heap ; on falsehood, falsehood.
 Truth is the living liberal breath of heaven,
 That sweeps these fogs away, with all their vermin.
 And, on my soul, I think that *Agamemnon*
 Deserves some touch of blame. To put the power,
 The power of blessing or oppressing *millions*,
 Of doing or great good or equal mischief,
 Ev'n into doubtful hands, is worse than careless.
 Ye gods, avert the miseries that hence
 On him and on his family may fall !
 But, see, the king.

S C E N E II.

AGAMEMNON, MELISANDER, ARCAS.

Agamem. Nay, *Arcas*, to my bosom,
 [*Arcas, kneeling.*

Come, let me proudly take a faithful heart !

Arcas, 'Thrice welcome, Sir, to *Argos* and *Mycenæ* !
 To virtue welcome !

Agamem. In my own dominions
 I am a stranger, *Arcas.* Ten full years,
 Or ev'n one day, is absence for a king,
 Without some mighty reason, much too long.
 For me a just and memorable war,
 Whose actions future times perhaps may sing,
 My own, my brother's, and my people's honour,
 With that of common *Greece*, must plead my pardon.
 Now shall my cares attend the works of peace :

G. 5

Calm

Calm deeds that glare not on the vulgar eye ;
 And yet it equal courage oft demands,
 To quell injustice, riot, factious rage,
 Dark-working blind cabal and bold disorder,
 As to confront the rigid face of war.
 Then tell me, *Arcas*, for, till self-inform'd,
 I mean to see with your discerning eyes,
 And sure I am they never will mislead me.
 Have I much subject for this peaceful courage ?
 This fortitude of state ?

Arcas. Too much, my lord.

Wou'd to the gods, our virtues, here at home,
 Could answer your heroic deeds abroad !
 You, doubtless, from the rugged school of war,
 Have brought sound manly hearts and generous
 spirits ;

While we, alas ! we rot in weedy peace,
 In slothful riot, luxury, profusion,
 And every meanness to repair that waste——
 I see the noble blood indignant mount,
 At this relation, to my sovereign's cheek :
 But, as affairs now press, I were a traitor,
 If with a sparing tongue I spoke the truth.

Agamem. Immortal gods ! have I, these ten long
 years,

Sustain'd a war at *Troy* ; fill'd every day
 With cares incessant, councils, dangers, toils,
 To cherish villains in licentious ease ?
 Have I thus squander'd vile, on *Phrygian* plains,
 The bravest blood of *Greece*, to shelter such ;
 And to assert their honour who have none ?
 But what can this perfidious, this *Egisthus*,
 What can he, say, by such loose rule propose ?

Is it his native bent? Or does he push
Some dark design, by these detested means?

Arcas. There is no vice a stranger to his heart,
Conceal'd beneath refin'd dissimulation;
Dissimulation, that on you yourself
Impos'd. Meantime, Sir, his outrageous views
Invade the throne of *Argos* and *Mycenæ*.

Agamem. Said you the throne of *Argos* and *Mycenæ*?
Already have I lost my noblest throne,
If he has robb'd me of my people's virtue;
'Tis but vain pomp, a tyrant's toy, the other.
And dares he bear a giddy look so high,
As to my throne? The villain! sure he dares not.

Arcas. Nay, more, my lord—He scales the daz-
zling height,
And almost grasps with impious hands your sceptre.

Agamem. To touch it, is perdition!—What!

Egisthus!

Egisthus seize my throne!

Arcas. So means the traitor.

Agamem. That creature of my power! that in-
fect! rais'd

By the warm beams of my mistaken bounty!
Whom, when my father's vengeance raz'd his race,
I fav'd, train'd up, with favours, honours heap'd;
And trusted in his hands at last a jewel,
Too precious for the faithless heart of man—
O gross, gross blindness!—Half my kingly power!

Ay, there breaks out his father's treacherous
blood!

There, there, too late, I find the base *Thyestes*!
Forgive me, *Atræus*, Oh my royal father!

Forgive my trusting thus the seed of him,
Of an abhorr'd, an execrable brother,
Who ev'n profan'd thy bed—But, ere yon orb
Shall from the purpled ocean rise again,
Oh injur'd *Atreus*! by thy sacred shade
I swear, to make for this a full atonement.

Is then this people, *Arcas*, grown so vile,
So very vile, that he dares entertain
The smallest hope to rival me in empire?
I like not vaunting—But, ungrateful people!
Can you prefer a nameless thing to me?
Am I not rough with scars on your account?
And, for the careful love I always bore you,
Your father nam'd? And yet prefer to me,
One who ne'er saw the glorious front of war,
For nothing famous but corrupting peace,
And whose sole merit was my ill-judg'd favour?
Can you?—Away!—Dishonour stains the thought!
How should this be?

Arcas. Not many, Sir, stand fix'd
On the deep principles of reason'd virtue,
Whom time nor steals, nor passion bears away.
Mankind, in general, float along the stream
Of custom, good or bad; and oft the mind
To that familiar grows, by gradual use
And still encroaching vice, whose first regard
Gave horror. Hence ten loosely govern'd years
Have wrought such strange events, that you no more
Behold your ancient *Argos* and *Mycenæ*.
These cities now with slaves and villains swarm.
At first, *Egisthus*, popular and fair,
All smiles and softness, as if each man's friend,

By

By hidden ways proceeded, mining virtue :
He pride, he pomp, he luxury diffus'd ;
He taught them wants, beyond their private means :
And strait, in bounty's pleasing chains involv'd,
They grew his slaves. Who cannot live on little,
Or as his various fortunes shall permit,
Stands in the market ready to be sold.

Agamem. O damn'd, detested traffic !—But proceed.

Arcas. While the luxurious fever thus increas'd,
Still in proportion as it gather'd rage,
He lent it fewel, and, more bold, disclos'd
His noon-day treason. Murmurs went about,
And spread at last into the common talk,
That you was proud, severe, beneath the notion
Of holding firm the helm of state, a tyrant ;
That in vain wars, which nought imported them,
You spent their treasure, shed their noblest blood ;
And that, *Troy* conquer'd once, to her rich plains
You meant from *Argos* to transplant your empire.

Meantime, in private, all, whom wild debauch
Has set adrift from every human tie ;
Whom riot, want, and conscious guilt inflame,
Holding the gods and virtue in contempt,
Amidst their bowls ; such are his bosom friends :
And join'd to them, a meaner ruffian band,
Of villains bold in crimes, whose trade is murder,
Hang in black clouds around him ; whence, I fear,
A sudden tempest is prepar'd to burst.

This, Sir, from duty and a faithful zeal,
I plain unfold : nor, on my word alone,
Believe these accusations ; clear as day,
I for them will produce the strongest proof.

Agamem.

Agamem. I thank thee, *Arcas*. Truth, tho' sometimes clad

In painful lustre, yet is always welcome,
 Dear as the light that shews the lurking rock :
 'Tis the fair star that, ne'er into the main
 Descending, leads us safe thro' stormy life——
 Gods ! how it tears me from each calmer thought !
 To think this traitor, that this double traitor,
 This traitor to myself and to my people,
 Should by such sneaking, such unmanly ways,
 Thus filch away my crown !——
 Why stand I chafing here ? One timely deed
 Is worth ten thousand words—Come then, my friends,
 Come and behold me seize amidst his guards,
 His coward guards—Guilt ever was a coward—
 This rival king, and with him crown my triumph.
 Till then *Troy* smokes in vain, and *Agamemnon*
 Cannot be said to conquer.

Melis. Sir, beware——

Agamem. Of what beware ? Where am I, *Melisander* ?

Am I not in *Mysenæ* ? in my palace ?
 Are not these crowds, that stream along the streets,
 My subjects all ? Of what should I beware ?
 Not seize a traitor in my own dominions ?
 Yes, I will seize him, *Melisander*,—will !

Melis. What grace to kings such generous ardour
 gives !

But tho' brave deeds be warm at first conceiv'd,
 Let the best purpose cool, nor miss your blow.
 More firm and sure the hand of courage strikes,
 When it obeys the watchful eye of caution.
 You hear from *Arcas*, Sir, what ruffian bands,

What

What secret deaths, what daggers lurk around him :
Be cautious then, for virtue's, glory's sake !
And, when you strike, strike home.

Agamem. O for those *Greeks* !

That this rude day are tossing on the seas ;
Those hardy *Greeks*, whom ten years war has steel'd,
With toils, with dangers, and with death familiar :
Then should you see what chaff before the wind
Are these weak sons of soft enfeebling peace,
These wretches only bold where unresisted.

Melis. But since, my lord, you cannot now exert
This nobler force, let prudence take its place.
Have patience, only, till you safely can,
And surely, seize him.

Agamem. Well, till then I will.

And, tho' not made of patient mold, in this
I will have patience, will, some tedious hours,
Repress my vengeance——

[*Pausing.*

Yes, I like the thought——

He may be seiz'd this evening at the banquet,
Be there surpriz'd with ease—and shall !——
For by th' eternal gods that rule mankind !
The sleep of death alone shall seal these eyes,
While such a wretch holds power in my dominions.

Oh *Clytemnestra* ! to the public, now,
Succeeds the private pang.—At thought of thee,
New rage, new vengeance, shake my inmost soul !
Was my belov'd, my queen, my *Clytemnestra*,
So long abandon'd in a villain's power,
Who knows, it seems, no limits, owns no laws,
Save those one vice imposes on another ?
And now the secret cause, I fear, is plain,
Of that unusual damp, that strange dejection,

Which

Which clouded her at meeting. Still the more
 I pour'd my fondness, still the more distress'd
 She seem'd ; and, turning from my tender gaze,
 The copious shower stole down her troubled cheek ;
 As if she pity'd those my blind endearments,
 And in her breast some horrid secret swell'd—
 Should it be so—Confusion !—Can I stoop
 Ev'n to suppose it !—How from slight mistakes
 Great evils spring ! But the most fruitful source
 Of every evil—O that I, in thunder,
 Could sound it o'er the list'ning earth to kings—
 Is delegating power to wicked hands.

Melis. My lord, let no suspicions of the queen
 E'er taint your bosom : if I judge aright—

Agamem. No, *Melisander*, no ; I am not jealous ;
 In me that passion and contempt were one ;
 No, 'tis her situation gives me horror,
 Her dreadful situation !—But of this
 Enough.—Then tell me, *Arcas*, tell me truly ;
 Are there a few, say, do there yet remain
 A faithful few ! to save the sinking state ?
 Can you, ere night, collect an honest band,
 A band of such as worthy are to rescue
 Their king and country from impending fate ?
 Ah ! little thought I, that amidst my subjects,
 Embosom'd sweet in peace, I, like a tyrant,
 Should e'er have needed guards.

Arcas. Yes, Sir, I know
 A band of generous youths, whom native virtue,
 Unbroken yet by avarice or profusion,
 Fits for our purpose : These I can collect—

Agamem. About it quickly, *Arcas* ; lose no time :
 Go, bring me to the banquet those brave youths :
 I long

The End of the Third Act.

AGAMEMNON, MELISANDER.

Rais'd

Rais'd by distress, of noble sense and spirit ;
 But, by poetic visions led astray,
 She dreamt *Apollo* lov'd her, and the gift
 Of prophecy bestow'd, to gain her promise.
 The gift once her's, the chaste-faithless maid
 Deceiv'd the god ; who therefore, in revenge,
 Since he could not recall it, made it useless,
 For ever doom'd to meet with disregard.
 E'er since the lovely visionary raves
 With dignity ; foretells the fate of nations :
 And, judging of the future from the past,
 Has oft been wondrous happy in her guesses.
 Some strange, some recent instances of this
 Confirm her in her venerable madness.

Melis. Be not too rash in judging, *Agamemnon* ;
 For we blind mortals but a little know
 Of boundless Nature—Hark ! the princess comes ;
 I hear her voice, I hear the voice of sorrow.

S C E N E II.

AGAMEMNON, MELISANDER, CASSANDRA,
attended by Trojan Captives.

Cass. (entering.) O hostile roofs ! O *Ilium* ! O my
 country !

Agamem. I cannot blame your grief, unhappy
 princess,
 But, if it can relieve you, here be sure
 Of an asylum, safe as *Priam's* palace.

Cass.

Cass. O sweet abode ! O palace of my father's !
My bleeding heart melts while I think of thee ;
Think of the days of innocence and joy,
That shone upon me there. How chang'd art thou !
Ah ! what a scene, when I beheld thee last !
Rage, blood, and flames, and shrieks of murder round
me !

The sword of *Pyrrhus*, and a feeble father !
Where was your *Hector* then ? where all his sons ?
O *Priam's* numerous race ! what are you now
Become ? Ah me, the desolating gods
Have laid their hands, their iron hands, upon us.

Agamem. From past misfortunes, princess, turn
your eye——

Cass. 'Tis true, the future may full well suffice.
Th' avenging sisters trace my footsteps still,
The hunters still pursue the trembling doe.
Where am I ?—Gods !—Black heavy drops of blood
Run down the guilty walls—With the dun shades
Of night ascending, lo ! successive troops
Of *Trojan* ghosts are flocking to the banquet :
Permitted by th' infernal gods, they come,
To feast them with the horrors of this night,
To snuff the blood of victims—Ha ! the car,
The gay triumphal car, is turn'd, at once,
Into a mournful bier, that nods along,
Solemn and slow—Yes, *Troy* shall be aveng'd :
I shall the vengeance see ; and yet not see
Thy light, returning *Phæbus*.

Agamem. Fair *Cassandra*,
Indulge no more these melancholy views,
These visions, form'd by gloomy-minded grief.
We will each art, each tender art employ,

To

Rais'd by distress, of noble sense and spirit ;
 But, by poetic visions led astray,
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 These visions, form'd by gloomy-minded grief.
 We will each art, each tender art employ,

To

To soothe your sorrows, to restore your peace.
 You come not to the proud unfeeling race
 Of yesterday: we know the turns of fortune:
 Have drunk the cup, the wholesome cup of sufferings,
 That not inflames, but moderates the mind.
 Then fear not, princess; let me call you daughter!
 Your treatment shall be such as well becomes
 The dignity of woe, becomes the great,
 The fair unhappy. Nought shall touch your honour:
 I know, I feel your beauty: but here dwell
 The gods of hospitality and faith;
 The hymeneal powers are honour'd here.
 Yes, I will shield thee, equal with *Electra*,
 With my lov'd daughter in thy friendship blest.

Cass. In spite of swelling tears, that choak the
 way

Of bitter tears by big remembrance shed,
 I own thy goodness, thank thee, *Agamemnon*.
 Meantime, in vain are all thy generous cares,
 On my account. The gods of death will soon
 Extend o'er me their all-protecting wing.
 I shall not long, I shall not want protection:
 But who, devoted prince, will give it thee?
 Ev'n while we talk, the secret wheels are turning,
 That lift the vile, and lay the mighty low.
 I pity thee, the house of *Pelops* pity:
 Forgive me, *Troy*: I pity thy destroyers.

Enter an Officer.

Officer. A messenger from *Arcas*, Sir——

Agamem. 'Tis well.

To my apartment lead him—you, meanwhile,

[*To Melisander.*

Attend

AGAMEMNON. 141

Attend the princess; grace her with such honours,
As suits her to receive, and me to give.

SCENE III.

CASSANDRA, CHORUS of Trojan Captives,
MELISANDER.

Melis. Fair princess, stop these tears. Exert that
best,

That noblest virtue, which can master fortune,
An equal mind.

Cass. Not for myself I weep!—
But, oh my dear companions! How for you
My bosom yearns!

Chorus. We have together liv'd!
Together let us die!

Cass. Together liv'd!
At this ten thousand images awake;
Ten thousand little tenderesses throb.

Chorus. O days of youth! O careless days! Un-
taught

To weep, if love shed not the pleasing tear.

Cass. O woods, O fountains! O delightful meads!
That lent us flowers, the prime of blooming *May*,
To deck our tresses.

Chorus. O the yellow banks
Of fair *Scamander*! in whose silver stream
We us'd to bathe, beneath the secret shade!

Cass. O chearful *Ida's* airy fummits! where
The gods delight to dwell!

Chorus.

Chorus. O silent *Troy*!

Whose streets have often echo'd with our song!

Cass. O the lost labours of a ruin'd people!
O country! freedom! friends! relations! all
That gives or taste, or dignity, to life,
All, all is gone, beyond recovery gone!

Chorus. Then let us die!

Cass. For me, the hunted hart
More fervent pants not for the cooling stream,
Than I to wrap me in the quiet shades
Of death. But ah, my helpless friends, for you
I feel its keenest anguish.

Chorus. Not for us;
Feel not for us. What comfort have we left?
What hope, what wish in life?—One healing pang,
And then we weep no more.

Cass. Refreshing thought!
And then from bondage, pain, from every ill,
For ever free, we meet our friends again;
Our parents, brothers, sisters, lovers meet.

Chorus. Then let us die, and sudden be the blow!

Cass. The gods assent.—Behold the happy shore!
But, ah! there lies a stormy sea betwixt!

Melis. So sings the plaining nightingale her woes.

Cass. Ah, far unlike the nightingale!—She sings,
Unceasing, thro' the balmy nights of *May*,
She sings from love and joy, while we, alas!—

Melis. Behold the queen.—Deep-wrapt in thought
she seems.—

Cass. O direful musings!—Lead us from her pre-
sence.

SCENE

SCENE IV.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Sweet peace of mind ! whence pleasure borrows
taste,
Daughter of virtue ! whither art thou fled ?
To what calm cottage, to what blameless shade,
Far from these guilty walls ? O walls ! O race !
To horrors doom'd !—Before me gathers fast
A deep'ning gloom, with unknown terrors big.—
Not quite unknown—Gods ! what a dreadful hint
Flash'd from *Egisthus*, when I saw him last !
And to what desperate actions cannot safety,
Ambition, love, and vengeance, drive the soul !—
Distraction lies that way—yet, how escape ?
Shame urges on behind, unpitying shame,
That worst of furies, whose fell aspect frights
Each tender feeling from the human breast.
Goodness itself ev'n turns in me to gall,
And only serves to heighten my despair.
How kind was *Agamemnon* ! generous ! fond !
How more than usual mild ! As if, on purpose,
To give these tortures their severest sting.
Happy ! compar'd to this tormented state,
Where honour only lives with inward lash,
To punish guilt, happy the harden'd wretch,
Who feels no conscience, and who fears no crime !—
Oh horrid ! horrid ! Oh flagitious thought !
How is it with the mind that can endure

A thought so dire!—My sole remaining hope
 Is death, kind death, that amiable sleep,
 Which wakes no more,—at least to mortal care—
 But then the dark Hereafter that may come.—
 There is no anchor, that against this storm,
 This mighty sea of doubts and fears, can hold.
 Hopeless I drive.—One thought destroys another.—
 This stranger too!—Should it be *Melisander*—
 Is there a fear, however idle, wild,
 And ev'n almost impossible, which guilt,
 The feeble-hearted guilt not entertains?—
 I order'd his attendance.—See, he comes.

S C E N E V.

CLYTEMNESTRA, MELISANDER.

Clyt. Stranger, are you not he whom *Agamemnon*,
 By an amazing chance, in his return,
 Sav'd from a desert isle?

Melis. Madam, the same.

Clyt. I much admire your fortunate deliverance,
 And wish to hear your story: why there left,
 And how sustain'd. Indulge me with it, stranger.

Melis. Madam, I come this moment from the
 king,
 Charg'd with a matter which requires dispatch:
 But, that transacted once, without delay,
 I will attend your orders.

Clyt. Then, it seems,
 You are not quite a stranger in *Mycenæ*.
 What is your country?

Melis.

Melis. Greece.

Clyt. What part of Greece?

Melis. At Athens I was born.

Clyt. But in Mycenæ

Have you not in Mycenæ been before?

Melis. There are not, Madam, many parts of
Greece

To me unknown.

Clyt. Why thus avoid my question?—

Have you been here before?

Melis. Madam, I have.

Clyt. Here in this palace?—Ha! why stand you
silent?

You keep your eyes unmov'd upon the ground.

What should this mean? Beneath that rough disguise

There lurks, methinks, a form, which somewhere I

Have seen.

Melis. The dream of fancy, that the more

It is indulg'd, perplexes still the more.

I tarry here too long; the king's commands

Admit of no delay.

Clyt. 'Tis so! 'tis so!

Air, features, manner, voice, this study'd haste,

The shifts of one unpractis'd in deceit,

All, all conspire—One image wakes another,

And thick they flash upon me!

Melis. You grow pale,

You tremble, Madam; that mistake, I find,

Concerning me turns wilder and disturbs you,

Let me retire——

Clyt. A moment—stay——

Melis. In vain,

I find it is in vain to wrap me longer

In these evasions.

Clyt. Melifander.

Melif. Madam——

Clyt. And can it be? Behold I then the man,
Whom I so long have number'd with the dead?
Almighty gods! Behold I *Melifander*?
But, ah! how chang'd! how darken'd with suspi-
cion!

Yes, I am deem'd the author of his woes.

Melif. Madam, forgive——

Clyt. Why else from me conceal
Your wish'd return—I plainly am distrust'd—
By *Agamemnon* too—it was unkind,
Unjust, unfriendly, shocks me, *Melifander*.

Melif. Indeed you wrong me, Madam, wrong
me much,

To judge me apt or to conceive or spread
Distrust. I would have perish'd by myself,
Unknown, unwept, in helpless solitude,
Rather than here return to this full world,
To set my mistress and her lord at variance.
O think me not a busy peace-destroyer!
Accursed is the wretch, to social life
The most inhuman foe, who in the nice,
The tender scenes of life, dares rashly meddle,
And sow division between friends and lovers.

Clyt. The generous heart is ever slow to blame,
But *Melifander*, not to me were owing,
Not in the least to me, those cruel woes,
This worse than death, which you so long have
suffer'd.

Instead of that, your fate, how, whither gone,
If carry'd off, or secretly destroy'd,
Was all a mournful mystery to me,

Dark

Dark as the night on which you disappear'd.
Did you but know, here in my secret soul,
What undissembled pangs your absence rouz'd,
What I have felt for you, and for myself,
In losing such a wife and faithful friend;
Knew you but these, O knew you, *Melifander*,
How your disaster has been truly mine,
You never could suspect me.

Melif. Witness Heav'n!

I never did—Your heart, I know, disdains
A thought that looks like cruelty or fraud.
From the first moment that his ruffians seiz'd me,
I had no doubt, I knew it was *Egisthus*.
Some time before I mark'd the rising storm,
And meant to warn you, but it sudden burst,
And bore me far away, far from all means,
Ev'n from all hope of lending you assistance.
Ay! there I suffer'd most. My fears for you,
At once by guile and violence beset,
Took off the point of my own proper woes.
But when your awful virtues struck my thought,
Your wisdom, spirit, resolution, truth;
That dread effulgence of the spotless soul,
Which smites the hardest villain into shame;
My fears appear'd impertinent and vain.
Yet doubtless, Madam, you have had occasion
For a firm ruling hand and watchful eye,
For every virtue; and I truly joy,
That *Agamemnon* finds at his return
Egisthus by your conduct thus restrain'd.

Clyt. By Heavens! he tries me.—O suspicious
guilt!

[*Aside.*

Your words are friendly, but your deeds are doubtful.

H 2

No,

No, *Melisander*, friendship with distrust
Can never dwell. And that I am distrusted
To me is certain—In a matter too,
That much concern'd my peace, concern'd my honour.

For did you ev'n ascribe your woes to me,
You could not manage with more distant caution.

Melis. Whence is it that the noble *Clytemnestra*,
Who us'd to shine in a superior sphere
Of fair serenity and candid peace,
Should to these doubts descend, these dark suspicions?
For me, I here attest the gods, my soul
Ne'er knew a thought, that swell'd not with esteem,
With love, and veneration of your virtues.
And for the king, no young enraptur'd lover,
In all the first effusions of his soul,
New to the mighty charm: no friend, who meets,
After long years of dark and silent absence,
His happy friend again, feels livelier joy,
Than *Agamemnon* feels, while his glad tongue
Runs out in endless praise of *Clytemnestra*—
But I must wait his orders——

Clyt. Do your duty.

I too must go, must to *Egisibius* strait *Aside.*
Impart this dreadful news.

S C E N E VI.

MELISANDER, *alone.*

She went abruptly——

And as we talk'd, methought, strange passions shook
Her inward frame, and darken'd every feature.

Behold

Behold the black, the guilt-concealing night,
Fast closes round. Wide, thro' this ample palace,
The lamps begin to shine. The tempest falls;
The weary winds sink, breathless. But, who knows,
What fiercer tempest yet may shake this night!
Soul-chearing *Phœbus*, with thy sacred beams
O quickly come, and chase these fullen shadows.

The End of the Fourth Act.

ACT V. SCENE I.

CLYTEMNESTRA, EGISTHUS.

Egist. **A**H, *Clytemnestra*! what a change is here!
And must I then thus steal an interview?
Are we alone?

Clyt. You fright me with that question:
You look astonish'd.

Egist. On the brink of ruin
We, tottering, stand.

Clyt. That is no news to me.

Egist. But——

Clyt. What?

Egist. We are discover'd.

Clyt. Ha! discover'd!

Egist. Yes, certainly discover'd. *Arcas* now,
By *Agamemnon's* orders, in the city
Collects a band, to seize me at the banquet,
A short hour hence. And my accusers, Madam,

H 3

You

You may be well assur'd, are not your friends.

Clyt. 'Tis plain! 'tis plain!—The parting fogs
disperse:

And now the doubtful scene stands all reveal'd—
Who could have thought they should dissemble thus?
But I can tell you more.

Egist. What, Madam? speak;
For danger presses on us.

Clyt. Saw you him,
This seeming stranger, fav'd by *Agamemnon*?

Egist. *Arcas* and he to-day, my friends inform me,
Were busy with the king; and doubtless, then,
It was concerted that I should be seiz'd.

Clyt. Ah! did you know, *Egisthus*, who he is!—

Egist. Who?

Clyt. *Melissander*.

Egist. Gods! and does he live?
For my confusion sav'd! O gross, gross folly!
To do an action of that kind by halves.
Had he been silent dust—To please you, Madam,
From a false tenderness for you, he lives——

Clyt. A mighty merit! glorious boast indeed!
Hear him, ye gracious gentle powers of love!
From tenderness for me, he did not murder
A worthy blameless man, who never hurt him;
He murder'd not my friend, my faithful friend.
Ah! 'tis such tenderness, that makes me wretched;
Such tenderness, that still in blacker guilt,
In the last depth of misery will plunge me.

Egist. It is not, Madam, now a time for this.
Think of our situation: close beset
By all those ills which mortals most abhor,
Whom have we to confide in but each other?

And

And this sad meeting is perhaps our last.
Concord alone, and vigorous measures, can
Prevent our ruin—But, from *Melissander*

What did you learn? Are you yourself suspected?

Clyt. I cannot find I am:—And yet I must.

Egist. But, as for me, my ruin is no secret.

Clyt. 'Tis true, some dark attempt goes on against
you.

Egist. Then have I rightly done.

Clyt. What have you done?

Egist. What prudence, justice, love, and vengeance
all

Demand ——

Clyt. Immortal Powers! you have not?—

Egist. No:

But must, and will—What else can you propose?

Clyt. Oh, any thing besides! immediate flight,
Eternal absence, death!——

Egist. Let others die!

Let the proud, faithless, false, injurious tyrant;
The hero glorious in his daughter's murder;
The scourge of *Greece*, who has, from wild ambition,
Shed so much blood—let *Agememnon* die!

Clyt. Oh heavens and earth! you shock me to dis-
traction!

I have, *Egisthus*, hitherto avoided
This dreadful point, still hoping you might drop
Your horrid resolution: now I tell you,
Before the listening gods, I plainly tell you,
That *Agememnon* shall not fall unwarn'd:
You shall not rise by me into his throne:
I will not be the tool of your ambition;
Will not be wretched, infamous for ever,

The blush of women, the disgrace of nature !
 That you may gain your execrable views,
 Mask'd under smooth pretences—I am guilty ;
 Alas ! I am—But think not therefore, tyrant !
 To give me law. There are degrees in guilt ;
 And I have still my reason left, have left
 Some resolution, some remains of virtue :
 Yes, I dare die ; and who dares die, *Egisthus*,
 Needs not be driv'n to villanous extremes !
 Mark me, insulting man !—My certain cure
 Of every woe, my cordial draught is ready ;
 And if you do not promise me, here swear
 To drop your fell designs on *Agamemnon*,
 To quit this palace—You may still escape—
 And never see me more ; I go, I go,
 This moment to discover all, and die !

Egist. What ! *Clytemnestra* !

Clyt. Nothing shall dissuade me.

I will not argue more—Say, only say,
 Must I betake me to this cruel refuge ?
 This dire necessity ?

Egist. Permit me, Madam ;

Hear me but once, and then pursue your purpose.

Suppose us guilty, what you will ;—yet, Madam,
 Shall we acknowledge and proclaim that guilt ?
 Shall we, by patient waiting for our doom,
 By pitiful neglect of self-defence,
 Unheard-of meanness ! stamp it into shame ?
 No ; let us wipe it out with bold success.
 It is success that colours all in life :
 Success makes fools admir'd, makes villains honest :
 All the proud virtue of this vaunting world
 Fawns on success, and power, how'er acquir'd.

If then, supposing guilt, it were a meanness
 To stoop to shame, can words express the madness
 Of stopping short with infamy and ruin,
 When justice, love, and vengeance, urge to glory?
 Instead of being deem'd a generous queen,
 The brave avenger of her sex's honour,
 Fam'd for her spirit, for her just resentment;
 Who greatly punish'd a perfidious husband,
 A cruel tyrant; one, who from his bed,
 His throne, propos'd, with open shame, to turn her,
 And to her place to take his country's foe,
 To take a *Trojan* captive, proud *Cassandra*:
 Instead of such renown, can *Clytemnestra*—
 Forgive the doubt—Can she submit to pass,
 Thro' future times for an abandon'd woman?
 A feeble, spiritless, abandon'd woman!—
 Nay, Madam, hear the truth, what now I tell you
 Must, in a little scanty hour, take place;
 In a few moments, you must be the first
 Or last of women; be the public scorn,
 Or admiration of approving *Greece*—
 You know you must—be *Agamemnon's* slave,
Cassandra's slave, or nobly punish both,
 And reign with me in happiness and glory.

Consult your heart; can you resolve on shame?
 On voluntary shame? That only ill
 The generous fear, which kills the soul itself.
 Were those fair features, full of lovely grandeur,
 Form'd for confusion? That majestic front,
 To be bow'd down with infamy and wildness?
 Ah! can you bear contempt? The venom'd tongue
 Of those whom ruin pleases? The keen sneer,
 The lewd reproaches of the rascal herd;

H 5

Who

Who for the self-same actions, if successful,
 Would be as grossly lavish in your praise?—
 To sum up all in one—Can you support
 The scornful glances, the malignant joy,
 Or more detested pity of a rival?
 Of a triumphant rival?—No; you cannot.
 That conscious worth, which kindles in your eye,
 Tells me you cannot.—

But, in vain disputes
 No more to squander these important moments,
 Know, that I have not, to the frail decision
 Of wav'ring fear and female weakness left
 Our freedom, safety, happiness, and honour.
 Ev'n in your own despite you shall be sav'd.
 And could you be so lost to reason, wild,
 To do what woman never did before,
 What shocks humanity, accuse yourself;
 You only court dishonour to no purpose:
 For *Agamemnon* now cannot escape;
 I am already master of this palace;
 All is prepar'd, my people all are fix'd,
 All properly dispos'd; and here I swear,
 By sacred justice, glory, love, and vengeance!
 He dies!—dies in the bath, before the banquet!—
 And with him dies *Cassandra*, she who dares,
 In her presumptuous thought, usurp thy honours.
 She weeps!—O my ador'd! my *Clytemnestra*!
 Forgive this barbarous necessary truth!
 Did I not love thee, love thee more than empire,
 Than life and glory, would I thus disclose
 These dangerous secrets? Could I not have veil'd,
 And, with more certain caution, gain'd my purpose?

Clyt.

Clyt. Oh that you had, *Egisthus*! then, alas!
I should have fondly thought myself less guilty.

Egist. I lose myself in softness, while the time,
With danger big, demands intrepid deeds.
Wipe off these tears—When next we meet again,
All will be well.

S C E N E II.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ah! when we meet again!—
I stand, at last, convinc'd, and must dissemble—
Yet how dissemble? Painted in my face,
Are the full horrors of this bloody deed.—

But who are these approaching?—Ha!—*Cassandra*!
How fair she seems! how lovely! hateful charms!
That well may rival mine, decay'd, and sunk
By guilt and sorrow—She possesses my bed!
Possess my scepter!—This restores my spirit;—
I am abus'd! too patient!—Perish all!
Perish myself, *Egisthus*, *Agamemnon*!
So this proud rival, this *Cassandra*, perish!

S C E N E III.

CASSANDRA, Trojan Captives, MELISANDER.

Melis. Daughters of *Ilium*! By the king's command,
I come to ask your presence at the banquet.

Till then allow me to partake your woes :
 I have a reverence for them. I myself,
 Thanks to the gracious gods ! have known misfor-
 tune ;

I am with grief acquainted ; therefore can
 For others feel. Sweet source of every virtue,
 O sacred Sorrow ! He who knows not thee,
 Knows not the best emotions of the heart,
 Those tender tears that humanize the soul,
 The sigh that charms, the pang that gives delight ;
 He dwells too near to cruelty and pride,
 And is a novice in the school of virtue.

Cass. We thank thee, stranger, for thy generous
 pity.

Heaven has, it seems, throughout diffus'd the good.
 May the kind Gods, the hospitable Powers,
 For this befriend thee ! Thou must wander still,
 Wilt their protection want.—But *Agamemnon* !
 Where is the king !

Melis. He bathes him for the banquet,
 The banquet earn'd by ten years war and toil.

Cass. Short-sighted man ! to dream of festal joy,
 When his next banquet is perhaps with *Pluto*.

He comes ! the god comes rushing on my soul !
 O gently soothe me with the voice of music !
 Assuage my pangs with harmony !—Methinks,
 I hear *Apollo's* lyre.

Melis. Mysterious powers !

Cass. 'Tis gone—And now harsh discord takes its
 place :

Dire yellings now affright my trembling ear.
 What means this uproar of the howling forest ?
 The lions and wolf, together leagu'd,

Pursue the lion's life.—Behold ! the snare,
Th' infernal snare is set, spread by the stream,
Where, unsuspecting harm, he bathes at noon.
Soon will these guiltless waters blush with blood.

Melis. There is a sort of gloomy light in this,
That flashes horror on me.

Cass. A black swarm
Of fell ideas seize my fancy.—Hence !
O snatch me from this palace ! shambles rather !
It smells of carnage ; breathes a hideous steam,
As if from gaping sepulchres exhal'd.
And lo ! the spotless loves, the sports, the joys,
The weeping *Lares* fly : while in their place,
The Vices all, the raging Furies come ;
And with them *Comus*, the flush'd god of banquets,
Besmear'd with gore—They sing the funeral hymn—
What do I see ? What mean these mangled forms ?
These pale, these nightly phantoms ; such as rise,
To working fancy's eye, in troubled dreams?—
See ! where they sit for ever at the gates,
Demanding vengeance—Vengeance is at hand—
Ha ! 'tis the murder'd boys, whose limbs were here,
Serv'd up to their own fire to be devour'd !—

Melis. She wakes my dread—The story of *Troestes* !

Cass. With this devoted race involv'd I fall :
Nor falls the slave alone—The master falls !
But man shall die for man, for woman woman :
Remember this.

Melis. The slave, the master fall !

Cass. Ah, bosom-traitress ! Ill-persuaded queen !
And canst thou then the barbarous secret keep ?

Melis. What queen ? what secret ? Speak more
plain, *Cassandra* !

Cass.

Cass. From guilt, in vain, to greater guilt you fly,

From crime to crime precipitated—No !
The wicked find no peace—Distraction waits thee !—
One effort more—Yes, save thy lord, and die—
That throe belong'd to virtue—Cannot then
The gentle Powers prevail ?—A moment yet,
The doubtful balance yet allows a moment—
Down, down it goes, for vengeance and for *Troy* !
But, ah ! such vengeance, as ev'n foes themselves
Abhor to see !

Melis. She staggers all my reason.
Unveil these dreadful oracles—Perhaps—

Cass. Yes, in a moment, they will be too plain.
The moment comes ! The Furies lash it on !
Ha ! Now !

Melis. Unusual horror creeps—

Cass. Alas !

Keep from the murderous sacrificer's hand,
O keep the victim bull ! Lo ! seiz'd, he spurns,
He foams in vain—Behold the lifted blow !
Behold the thirsty steel !—They strike him !—Hark !
What dismal echoes run from room to room !

Melis. I heard a distant noise !—

[*The noise of Agamemnon's assassination
heard indistinctly, and at a distance,
behind the scenes.*]

Cass. Again !—They strive,
Th' assassins labour who shall wound him most.
'Tis done !—He falls !—

AGA-

AGAMEMNON, *behind the Scenes.*

[*The noise heard distinctly, and near.*

Off! villains! cowards! off!—

By villains murder'd!—Oh!

Melis. Great gods! the king!

SCENE IV.

MELISANDER, CASSANDRA, Trojan Captives,
ELECTRA, ORESTES.

Elect. Stop, generous stranger! *Agamemnon's*
friend!

Melis. What would *Electra*? what with *Melisander*?

Elect. Heavens! *Melisander*!

Melis. To the king's assistance

I fly; detain me not.

Elect. He is no more!—

Melis. Ha! dead!

Elect. Yes, murder'd by *Egisthus*! dead!

Pierc'd with a thousand wounds! O horror! horror!—

We have not time for grief—*Orestes*—Quick!

Fly! save my brother!

Orestes. Leave my father!—No!

It is but once that I have ever seen him,

Shall I no more?

Elect. But to revenge his death,

O fly, *Orestes*, for that glorious purpose!

Tremendous gods! Methinks I see his ghost,

That beckons you away!

Orestes. I come ! I come !

Oh *Melisander*——

Elect. Brother !

Orestes. Oh, my sister !

What will become of thee ?

Elect. Good *Melisander*,

O guard my brother ! save our only hope !

I heard a noise——Farewell !

Orestes (going). Ah, poor *Electra* !

S C E N E V.

ELECTRA, CASSANDRA, Trojan Captives.

Elect. The murderers come ! stain'd with my father's blood !

Hide me, *Cassandra*, hide me from a fight
I cannot bear, a scene to Nature shocking !

S C E N E VI.

The back-scene opening discovers, at a distance, Agamemnon's body. Electra throws herself by it.

CASSANDRA, Trojan Captives, EGISTHUS *with some of his party.*

Egist. Enough, my friends ! How low, how silent, now,

The

The mighty boaster lies !—Another blow
Crowns my revenge.—

Cass. It shall not, base assassin
The gods are just ; amidst the crimes of men,
Are firmly just, supremely wise and good :
The gods are here, in all their terrors present !
See where in dreadful majesty they sit !
And write thy doom in *Agamemnon's* blood !

Egist. Think not to shake me with these gloomy
fables :

This arm, that has acquir'd, shall guard my power ;
And since I now enjoy my long-wish'd vengeance,
All here is calm and chearful.

Cass. The false boast
Of agonizing guilt ! Thy soul, I see,
Beneath this harden'd pride, this brutal courage,
Boils with black torments, and with inward tempest.
I know whence breaks that gleam of joy athwart thee,
As lightning flashes o'er a troubled sky :
Thou dream'st the prince now falls beneath thy fury :
But hear and tremble—young *Orestes* lives !

Egist. Hence with thy vain predictions, doating
woman !

S C E N E VII.

EGISTHUS, CASSANDRA, &c. and to them Assassins
sent to murder ORESTES.

Egist. Well, is *Orestes* dead ?

Assas.

Affaf. Ah, Sir! escap'd—
When all was in confusion, here, and tumult.

Egift. O nothing then is done! Fly! tardy villains!

Pursue him to the farthest verge of earth,——
No dark retreat, no country.—But here comes
Another storm. Distraction wings her pace.

SCENE VIII.

CLYTEMNESTRA, EGISTHUS, CASSANDRA,
&c.

Clyt. Off! give me way! to desarts let me fly!
The wildest savage there!——
Why pierce me thus with looks!—In every eye
There is a dagger; chief in thine (*to Egisthus*)—
Ha! villain!

I know thee; know these eyes, where smiling Love
To the red glarings of a Fury's torch
Is now transform'd.—Yes, traitor! turn away:
But, ere you go, give me my peace again;
Give me my happy family around;
Give me my virtue, honour, nay, my glory;
Or give me death, tho' death cannot relieve me.—
Are these the deeds of love?—I cannot step,
Unless I dip my shivering feet in blood.
Compar'd with this polluted, this dire palace,
The sepulchre is gay.—But whither fly?——
Ah, what avails it where the guilty fly,
Since from themselves they cannot!—Ha! behold!
The black abyfs discloses to my view;

And

And down I go, a dark, a deep descent!—
 Hell from beneath is mov'd at my approach :
 Its princes flock around. Behold, they say,
 The greatly wretched, greatly wicked woman,
 She who preferr'd the villain to the hero !
 The *Trojan* shades, with sharp derision, thank me :
 The *Grecian* droop—Lo! where he comes himself !
 See! how in sullen majesty he stalks!—
 Oh, look not on me with that silent scorn !
 I am too curs'd already!—

[*Faints into the arms of her Attendants.*

Egist. Bear her hence :
 And look she be attended well.—But hark !
 What new alarm ?

S C E N E IX.

EGISTHUS, CASSANDRA, &c. to them a MES-
 Senger.

Mes. As *Melissander*, Sir,
 Bore off *Orestes* to th' assembled senate,
 He shew'd the prince, and rous'd them to revenge.
 'Tis nought but rage. The people in a torrent,
 By *Arcas* headed, pour upon the palace.
 Besides, each moment, *Agamemnon's* troops—

Egist. Quick! summon here my friends—In *Io's*
 grove
 They ready wait. We this important day
 Will or with conquest crown, or bravely die.

Cass.

Cass. No tyrant, no! the gods refuse thee that:
Not like the brave, but like the trembling coward,
Th' assassinating coward, thou shalt die;
There! in that spot, where *Agamemnon* lies!

Egist. Lead these ill-boding women to their fate;
And guard *Electra*.

Cass. The most grateful gift
A tyrant can bestow is instant death.
We shall be happy soon. But all the gods,
Combining all their mercy, from remorse,
From scorn and misery, cannot save the villain.

The End of the Fifth Act.

EPILOGUE.

EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs. CIBBER.

OUR bard, to modern epilogue a foe,
Thinks such mean mirth but deadens generous woe;
Dispels in idle air the moral sigh,
And wipes the tender tear from Pity's eye:
No more with social warmth the bosom burns;
But all th' unfeeling selfish man returns.

*
Thus he began:—And you approv'd the strain;
Till the next couplet sunk to light and vain.
You check'd him there.—To you, to reason just,
He owns he triumph'd in your kind disgust.
Charm'd by your frown, by your displeasure grac'd,
He hails the rising virtue of your taste.
Wide will its influence spread as soon as known:
Truth, to be lov'd, needs only to be shewn.

* Another epilogue was spoken after the first representation of the play, which began with the first six lines of this: but, the rest of that epilogue having been very justly disliked by the audience, this was substituted in its place.

Confirm

*Confirm it, once, the fashion to be good:
(Since fashion leads the fool, and awes the rude)
No petulance shall wound the public ear;
No hand applaud what honour shuns to hear:
No painful blush the modest cheek shall stain;
The worthy breast shall heave with no disdain.
Chastis'd to decency, the British stage
Shall erst invite the fair, invite the sage:
Both shall attend well-pleas'd, well-pleas'd depart;
Or, if they doom the verse, absolve the heart.*

ALFRED:

A L F R E D:

A

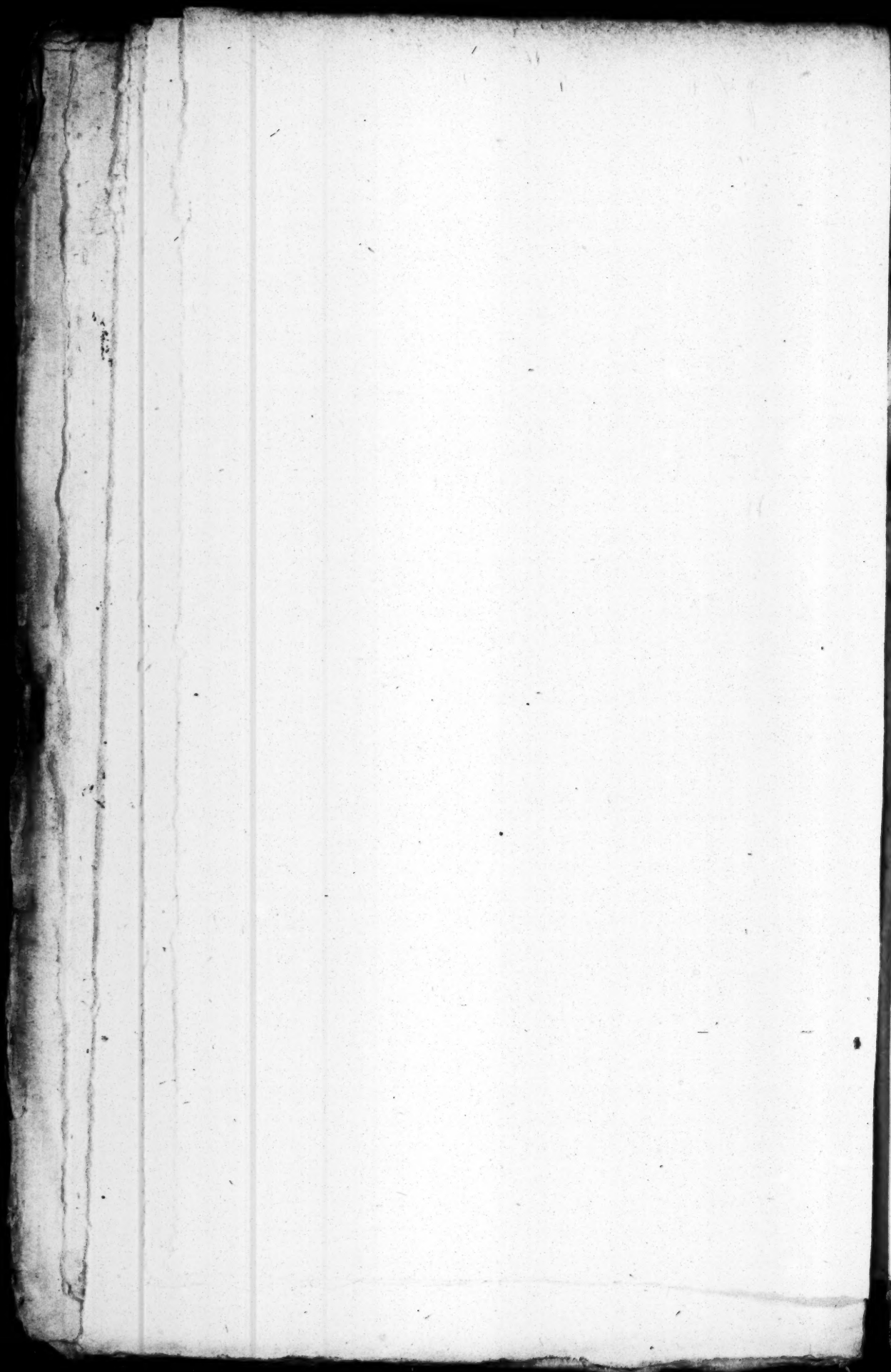
M A S Q U E.

Represented before their Royal Highnesses
the PRINCE and PRINCESS of WALES,
at *Cliffden*, on the first of *August*, 1740.

By Mr. THOMSON and Mr. MALLET.

*Si velimus cum priorum temporum necessitate certare,
vincemur. Ingeniosior est enim ad excogitandum
simulatio, veritate; servitus, libertate; metus, amore.*

Plin. Pan. Trajan.



THE ARGUMENT.

After the Danes had made themselves masters of Chippenham, the strongest city in the kingdom of Wessex; Alfred was at once abandoned by all his subjects. In this universal defection, that monarch found himself obliged to retire into the little isle of Athelney in Somersetshire; a place then rough with woods, and of difficult access. There, in the habit of a peasant, he lived unknown, for some time, in a shepherd's cottage. He is supposed to be found in this retreat by the Earl of Devon; whose castle, upon the river Tau, was then besieged by the Danes.

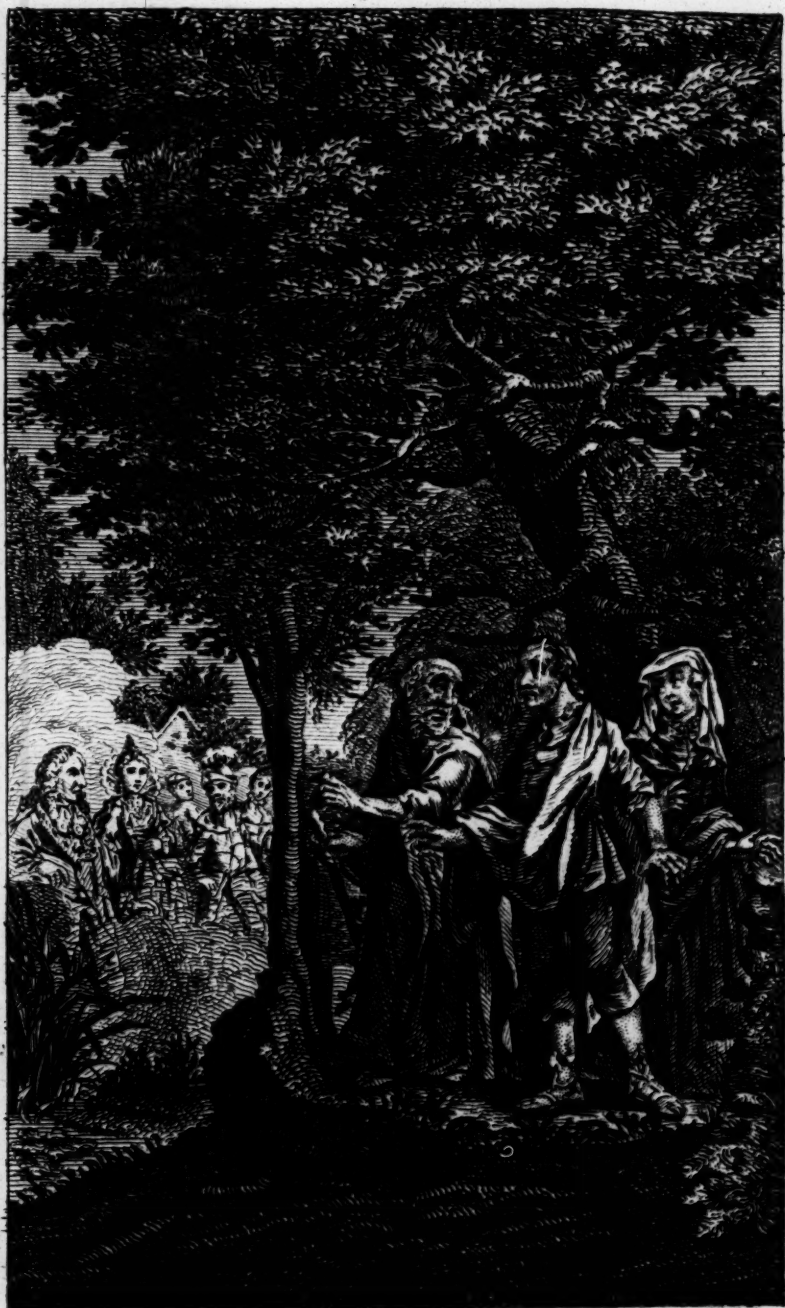
The Persons represented.

ALFRED,	Mr. Mikward.
ELTRUDA,	Mrs. Horton.
HERMIT,	Mr. Quin.
EARL of Devon.	Mr. Mills.
CORIN, a shepherd,	Mr. Salway.
EMMA, his wife,	Mrs. Clive.

A Bard, Soldiers, Spirits.

The SCENE represents a plain, surrounded with woods. On one side a cottage : on the other, flocks and herds in distant prospect. A hermit's cave in full view, overhung with trees, wild and grotesque.





G. V. Neijt sc.

Alfred.

A L F R E D :

A

M A S Q U E.

A C T I. S C E N E I.

CORIN, . EMMA.

Emma. S H epherd, 'tis he. Beneath yon aged
oak,
All on the flowery turf he lays him down.

Corin. Soft ; let us not disturb him. Gentle

Emma,
Poor tho' he be, unfriended and unknown,
My pity waits with reverence on his fortune,
Modest of carriage, and of speech most gracious,
As if some saint or angel, in disguise,
Had grac'd our lowly cottage with his presence,
He steals, I know not how, into the heart,
And makes it pant to serve him. Trust me, *Emma,*
He is no common man.

I 2

Emma.

Emma. Some lord, perhaps,
Or valiant chief, that from our deadly foe,
The haughty, cruel, unbelieving *Dane*,
Seeks shelter here.

Corin. And shelter he shall find.
Who loves his country, is my friend and brother.
Behold him well. Fair virtue in his aspect,
Ev'n thro' the homely russet that conceals him,
Shines forth and proves him noble. Seest thou, *Emma*,
Yon western clouds? The sun they strive to hide,
Yet darts his beam around.

Emma. Your thought is mine;
He is not what his present fortunes speak him,
But, ah! the raging foe is all around us:
We dare not keep him here.

Corin. Content thee, wife:
This island is of strength. Nature's own hand
Hath planted round a deep defence of woods,
The founding ash, the mighty oak; each tree
A sheltering grove: and choak'd up all between
With wild encumbrance of perplexing thorns,
And horrid brakes. Beyond this woody verge,
Two rivers broad and rapid hem us in.
Along their channel spreads the gulphy pool,
And trembling quagmire, whose deceitful green
Betrays the foot it tempts. One path alone
Winds to this plain, so roughly difficult.
This single arm, poor shepherd as I am,
Could well dispute it with twice twenty *Danes*.

Emma. Yet think, my *Corin*, on the stern decree
Of that proud foe, "Who harbours or relieves
" An *English* captain, dies the death of traitors:

" But

“ But who their haunts discovers, shall be safe,
“ And high rewarded.”

Corin. Now, just Heaven forbid
A *British* man should ever count for gain
What villainy must earn. No: are we poor?
Be honestly our riches. Are we mean,
And humbly born? The true heart makes us noble.
These hands can toil, can sow the ground, and reap
For thee and thy sweet babes. Our daily labour
Is daily wealth: it finds us bread and raiment.
Could *Danish* gold give more? And for the death
These tyrants threaten, let me rather meet it,
Than e'er betray my guest.——

Emma. Alas, the while,
That loyal faith is fled from hall and bower,
To dwell with village swains!

Corin. Ah, look! behold!
Where, like some goodly tree by wintry winds
Torn from the roots and withering, our sad guest
Lies on the ground diffus'd.

Emma. I weep to see it.

Corin. Thou hast a heart sweet Pity loves to
dwell in.

Dry up thy tears; and lean on this just hope:
If yet to do away his country's shame,
To serve her bravely on some blest occasion,
If for these ends this stranger sought our cottage,
The heavenly hosts are hovering here unseen,
To watch and to protect him.—But, oh! when—
My heart burns for it—shall I see the hour
Of vengeance on these *Danish* infidels,
That war with Heaven and us?

Emma. Alas, my love !

These passions are not for the poor man's state.
To Heaven and to the rulers of the land
Leave such ambitious thoughts. Be warn'd, my *Corin* :
And think our little all depends on thee.

S O N G.

*O Peace ! the fairest child of Heaven,
To whom the sylvan reign was given,
The wale, the fountain, and the grove,
With every softer scene of love :
Return, sweet Peace ! and cheer the weeping swain !
Return, with Ease and Pleasure in thy train.*

Corin. Hush : cease thy song—For see, our mourn-
ful guest
Has rais'd his head—and, lo ! who comes to greet him ;
His friend, the woodman of the neighbouring dale,
Whom late, as yeller evening-far arose,
At his request I found and hither brought.

S C E N E II.

ALFRED, *Earl of DEVON.*

Alfred. How long, O ever gracious Heaven !
how long
Shall war thus desolate this prostrate land ?
All, all is lost—And *Alfred* lives to tell it !
His cities laid in dust ! his subjects slaughter'd !
Or into slaves debas'd ! the murderous foe

Proud

Proud and exulting in the general shame!——
 Are these things so? and he without the means
 Of great revenge? cast down below the hope
 Of succouring those he weeps for? O despair!
 O grief of griefs!

Devon. Old as I am, my liege,
 In rough war harden'd, and with death familiar,
 These eyes have long forgot to melt with softness:
 But, O, my gracious master, they have seen——
 All-pitying Heaven!—such fights of ruthless rage,
 Of total desolation——

Alfred. O my people!
 O ruin'd *England*!—*Devon*, those were blest,
 Who dy'd before this time. Ha! and those robbers,
 That violate the sanctity of leagues,
 The reverend seal of oaths; that basely broke,
 Like nightly ruffians, on the hour of peace,
 And stole a victory from men unarm'd,
 Those *Danes* enjoy their crimes! dread vengeance!
 son

Of power and justice! come, array'd in terrors,
 Thy garment red with blood, thy keen sword drawn:
 O come, and on the heads of faithless men
 Pour ample retribution; men, whose triumph
 Upbraids eternal Justice.—But no more:
 Submission is Heaven's due.—I will not launch
 Into that dark abyss where thought must drown.
 Proceed, my lord: on with the mournful tale,
 My griefs broke off.

Devon. From yonder heath-crown'd hill,
 This island's eastern-point, where in one stream
 The *Tbous* and *Parra* roll their blending waves,

I look'd, and saw the progress of the foe,
 As of some tempest, some devouring fire,
 That ruins without mercy where it spreads.
 The riches of the year, the golden grain
 That liberal crown'd our plains, lies trampled wide
 By hostile feet, or rooted up; and waste
 Deforms the broad highway. From space to space,
 Far as my straining eye could shoot its beam,
 Trees, cottages, and castles, smook to heaven
 In one ascending cloud. But oh for pity!
 That way, my lord, where yonder verdant height
 Declining slides into a fruitful vale,
 Unfightly now and bare, a few poor hinds,
 Grey-hair'd, and thinly clad, stood and beheld
 The common ravage, motionless and mute,
 With hands to heaven uprais'd, they stood, and wept—
 My tears attended theirs——

Alfred. If this sad sight
 Could pain thee to such anguish, what must I,
 Their king and parent, feel?—It is a torment
 Beyond the strength of patience to endure.
 Why end I not at once this wretched being?
 The means are in my hand.—But shall a prince
 Thus poorly shroud him in the grave from pain,
 And sense of shame? The madman, nay, the coward,
 Has often dar'd the same. A monarch holds
 His life in trust for others. I will live then:
 Let Heaven dispose the rest.

Devon. Thrice-noble *Alfred*,
 And *England's* only hope, whose virtues raise
 Our frail mortality, our human dust,
 Up to angelic splendor and perfection;
 With you to bear the worst of ills, the spoil

Of wasteful war, the loss of life or freedom,
Is happiness, is glory.

Alfred. Ah, look round thee :
That mud-built cottage is thy sovereign's palace.
Yon hind, whose daily toil is all his wealth,
Lodges and feeds him. Are these times for flattery,
Or call it praise? Such gaudy attributes
Would misbecome our best and proudest fortunes.
But what are mine? what is this high-prais'd *Alfred*?
Among ten thousand wretches, most undone.
That prince who sees his country laid in ruins,
His subjects perishing beneath the sword
Of foreign rage, who sees and cannot save them,
Is but supreme in misery!

Devon. My liege,
Who has not known ill-fortune, never knew
Himself, or his own virtue. Be of comfort :
We can but die at last. Till that hour comes,
Let nobler anger keep our hopes alive.
A sudden thought, as if from heaven inspir'd,
Darts on my soul. One castle still is ours,
Tho' close begirt and shaken by the *Danes*.
In this disguise, my chance of passing on,
Of entering there unknown, is promising,
And wears a lucky face. 'Tis our last stake,
And I will play it like a man, whose life,
Whose honour hangs upon a single cast.
Meanwhile, my lord——

Alfred. Ha! *Devon*, thou hast rous'd
My slumbering virtue. I applaud thy thought.
The praise of this brave daring shall be thine :
The danger shall be common. We will both
Strait tempt the *Danish* camp, and gain this fort ;
To animate our brothers of the war,

Those *Englishmen* who yet deserve that name.
 And hear, eternal Justice ! if my life
 Can make atonement for them, King of kings !
 Accept thy willing victim. On my head
 Be all their woes : To them be grace and mercy.
 Come on, my noble friend.

Devon. Ah, good my liege,
 What fits a private valour, and might grace
 The simple soldier's courage, would proclaim
 His general's rashness. You are *England's* king :
 Your infant children, and your much-lov'd queen ;
 Nay more, the public weal, ten thousand souls,
 Whose hope you are, whose all depends on you,
 Forbid this enterprize. 'Tis nobler virtue
 To check this ardour, to reserve your sword
 For some great day of known and high import ;
 That to your country, to the judging world,
 Shall justify all hazards you may run.
 This trial suits but me.

Alfred. Well, go, my friend ;
 If thou shalt prosper, thou wilt call me hence
 To head my people from their fears recover'd.
 May that good angel, who inspir'd thy thought,
 Throw round thy steps a veil of cloudy air,
 That thou may'st walk invisible and safe !
 He's gone—and now, without a friend to aid me,
 I stand alone, abandon'd to the gloom
 Of my sad thoughts—Said I without a friend ?
 Oh blasphemous distrust ! Have I not Thee
 All-powerful Friend and Guardian of the righteous,
 Have I not Thee to aid me ? Let that thought
 Support my drooping soul.—But, list. Ha ! whence
 These air-born notes that sound in measur'd sweetness
 Thro' this vast silence ?

SCENE III.

Solemn music is heard at a distance. It comes nearer in a full symphony: after which a single trumpet sounds a high and awakening air. Then the following stanzas are sung by two ærial spirits unseen.

First SPIRIT.

*Hear, Alfred, father of the state,
Thy genius Heaven's high will declare!
What proves the Hero truly great,
Is, never, never to despair:
Is, never to despair.*

Second SPIRIT.

*Thy hope awake, thy heart expand
With all its vigour, all its fires.
Arise! and save a sinking land!
Thy country calls, and Heaven inspires.*

Both SPIRITS.

Earth calls, and Heaven inspires.

SCENE IV.

ALFRED alone.

*All hail, ye gentle ministers of heaven!
Your song inspires new patience thro' my breast,
And generous hope: it wings my mounting soul
Above th' entangling mafs of earthly passions,
That keep frail man, tho' struggling to be free,
Still fluttering in the dust.*

SCENE V.

ALFRED, *the HERMIT advancing from his cave.*

Alfred. Thrice-happy Hermit!

Whom thus the heavenly habitants attend,
 Blessing thy calm retreat; while ruthless war
 Fills the polluted land with blood and crimes,
 In this extremity of *England's* fate,
 Led by thy sacred character, I come
 For comfort and advice. Thy aged wisdom,
 Purg'd from the stormy cloud of human passions,
 And by a ray from heaven exalted, sees
 Deep thro' futurity. Say, what remains,
 What yet remains to save our prostrate country?
 Nor scorn this anxious question ev'n from me,
 A nameless stranger.

Hermit. *Alfred*, *England's* king,
 All hail! and welcome to this humble cell.

Alfred. Whence dost thou know me, venerable
 father?

Hermit. Last night, when with a draught from
 that cool fountain

I had my wholesome, sober supper crown'd;
 As is my stated custom, forth I walk'd,
 Beneath the solemn gloom, and glittering sky,
 To feed my soul with prayer and meditation.
 And thus to inward harmony compos'd,
 That sweetest music of the grateful heart,
 Whose each emotion is a silent hymn,
 I to my couch retir'd. Strait on mine eyes
 A pleasing slumber fell, whose mystic power

Seal'd

Seal'd up my senses, but enlarg'd my soul.
 At once, disclos'd amid the dark waste night,
 Appear'd a vision—not the dream of fancy,
 But sent from heav'n, prophetic, and divine.
 For know, this ample element contains
 Unnumber'd spiritual beings, or malign,
 Or good to man. These, when the grosser eye
 Of Nature sleeps, oft play their several parts,
 As on a scene, before th' attentive mind,
 And to the favour'd man disclose the future.
 Led by these spirits friendly to this isle,
 I liv'd thro' future ages; felt the virtue,
 The great, the glorious passions that will fire
 Distant posterity : when guardian laws
 Are by the patriot, in the glowing senate,
 Won from corruption; when th' impatient arm
 Of liberty, invincible, shall scourge
 The tyrants of mankind—and when the deep,
 Thro' all her swelling waves, shall proudly joy
 Beneath the boundless empire of thy sons.
 I saw thee, *Alfred*, too—But o'er thy fortunes
 Lay clouds impenetrable.

Alfred. Ah, good hermit,
 That scene is dark indeed ! Ye awful powers !
 To what am I reserv'd ? Still must I roam
 A wanderer here, inglorious and unknown !
 Or am I destin'd your great instrument,
 From fierce oppression to redeem this land ?

Hermit. Perhaps, the last.—But, prince, remember, then,
 The vows, the noble uses, of affliction.
 Preserve the quick humanity it gives,
 The pitying, social, sense of human weakness :
 Yet keep thy stubborn fortitude entire,

The

The manly heart that to another's woe
 Is tender, but superior to its own.
 Learn to submit ; yet learn to conquer fortune.
 Attach thee firmly to the virtuous deeds
 And offices of life : to life itself,
 With all its vain and transient joys, sit loose.
 Chief, let devotion to the sovereign mind,
 A steady, chearful, absolute, dependance
 On his best, wisest, government, possess thee.
 In thoughtless, gay, prosperity, when all
 Attends our wish, when nought is seen around us
 But kneeling flattery, and obedient fortune ;
 Then are blind mortals apt, within themselves
 To fix their stay, forgetful of the giver.
 But when thus humbled, *Alfred*, as thou art,
 When to their feeble natural powers reduc'd,
 'Tis then they feel this universal truth——
 That Heaven is all in all—and man is nothing.

Alfred. I thank thee, father, for thy pious counsel
 And witness, thou dread Power ! who seest my heart ;
 That if not to perform my regal task,
 To be the common father of my people,
 Patron of honour, virtue, and religion ;
 If not to shelter industry, to guard
 Her honest portion from oppressive pride,
 From wasteful riot, and the sons of rapine,
 Who basely ravish what they dare not earn ;
 If not to deal out justice, like the sun,
 With equal light, if not to spread thy bounty,
 The treasures trusted to me, not my own,
 On all the smiling ranks of nourish'd life ;
 If not to raise our drooping *English* name,
 To clothe it yet with terror ; make this land
 Renown'd for peaceful arts to bless mankind,

And

And generous war to humble proud oppressors :
 If not to build on an eternal base,
 On liberty and laws, the public weal :
 If not for these great ends I am ordain'd,
 May I ne'er idly fill the throne of *England*!

Hermit. Still may thy breast these sentiments retain,
 In prosperous life !

Alfred. Prosperity were ruin,
 Could it destroy or change such thoughts as these.
 When Those whom Heav'n distinguishes o'er millions,
 Profusely gives them honours, riches, power,
 Whate'er th' expanded heart can wish ; when they,
 Accepting the reward, neglect the duty,
 Or, worse, pervert those gifts to deeds of ruin ;
 Is there a wretch they rule so mean as they !
 Guilty, at once, of sacrilege to Heaven,
 And of perfidious robbery to men.—
 But hark ! methinks I hear a plaintive voice
 Sigh thro' the vale, and wake the mournful echo.

S O N G.

I.

*Sweet valley, say, where, pensive lying,
 For me, our children, England, sighing,
 The best of mortals leans his head.
 Ye fountains, dimpled by my sorrow,
 Ye brooks that my complainings borrow,
 O lead me to his lonely bed:
 Or if, my lover,
 Deep woods you cover,
 Ah, whisper where your shadows o'er him spread!*

II.

II.

'Tis not the loss of Pomp and pleasure,
 Of empire, or of tinsel treasure,
 That drops this tear, that swells this groan:
 No; from a nobler cause proceeding,
 A heart with love and fondness bleeding,
 I breathe my sadly-pleasing moan.
 With other anguish
 I scorn to languish:
 For Love will feel no sorrows but his own.

SCENE VI.

ALFRED, HERMIT, ELTRUDA, *advancing.*

Alfred. Sure, by the voice, and purport of the
 song,
 This generous mourner is my queen *Eltruda*.
 And yet how can that be?—O all good Powers!
 'Tis she! 'tis she!

Eltruda. My lord, my life, my *Alfred*!
 Oh, take me to thy arms; with toil o'ercome,
 And sudden transport, thus at once to find thee,
 In this wild forest, pathless, and perplex!

Alfred. Come to my soul, thou dearest, best of
 women!

Come, and repose thy sorrows in my bosom.

Oh, all my passions mix in doubtful strife!

If pain or joy prevail, I scarce can say,

While thus I clasp thee, and recal the perils

To which thy trembling steps have been expos'd.

Why hast thou left the convent where I plac'd thee?

Why,

Why, unprotected, trust thee to a land,
A barbarous land, where rages *Danish* war!
Our hospitable *England* is no more!

Eltruda. Dire was the cause, my *Alfred.* The
rous'd country,

All wild in breathless terror and confusion,
Inform'd us, a near party of the *Danes*,
Whose brutal fury spares no sex, no age,
No place however privileg'd or holy,
Were on full march that way. Instant I fled,
In this disguise, with only these attendants:
But in our way oft chear'd by airy voices,
To bear to this retreat our helpless children.

Alfred. Ah, wanderers too young! ah, hapless
children!

But more unhappy Sire! who cannot give,
To those he loves, protection.

Eltruda. Thou too, *Alfred*,
Art thou not unattended † None to serve thee,
To soothe thy woes, to watch thy broken slumbers!
And when the silent tear o'erflows thy eye,
None, with the warm and cordial lip of love,
To kiss it off! There is in love a power,
There is a soft divinity, that draws
Transport ev'n from distress; that gives the heart
A certain pang, excelling far the joys
Of gross unfeeling life. Besides, my *Alfred*,
Ev'n had the fury of this barbarous foe
Not forc'd me from the convent, life is short;
And now it trembles on the wing of danger:
Why should we lose it then? One well-sav'd hour,
In such a tender circumstance to lovers,
Is better than an age of common time.

Alfred.

Alfred. Oh, 'tis too much ! thy tenderness o'er-comes me !

Nay, look not on me with that sweet dejection,
Thro' tears that pierce my soul !—Chear thee, my
love :

Hope still the best ; that better days await us,
And fairer from remembrance.—Thou, *Eltruda*,
Thou art a pledge of happiness ! On thee
Good angels wait ; they led thy journey hither :
And I have heard them, in this wild retreat,
Warbling immortal airs, and strains of comfort.—
But ah, the foe is round us : and this isle
Now holds my soul's best wealth, the treasur'd store
Of all my joys.—I go to skirt it round,
To visit every creek and sedgy bank,
Where ruffles thro' the reeds the shadowy gale ;
Or where the bending umbrage drinks the stream ;
Lest danger unawares should steal upon us.
And now, by slow degrees, solemn and sad,
Wide-falling o'er the world, the nightly shades
Hush the brown woods, and deepen all their horrors :
While, humbled into rest, and aw'd by darkness,
Each creature seeks the covert. To that cell
Retire, my life. I will not long be absent.

The End of the First Act.

A C T

A C T II. S C E N E I.

ALFRED *alone.*

TIS now the depth of darkness and repose.
 All nature seems to rest ; while *Alfred* wakes
 To think, and to be wretched.—Where yon oak
 With wide and dusky shade o'erhangs the stream,
 That glides in silence by, I took my stand ;
 What time the glow-worm thro' the dewy path
 First shot his twinkling flame. I stood attentive,
 Listening each noise from wood-clad hill and dale ;
 But all was hush'd around. Nor trumpet's clang,
 Nor shout of roving foe, nor hasty tread
 Of evening passenger, disturb'd the wide
 And awful stillness. Homeward as I sped,
 O'er many a delve, thro' many a path perplex,
 Maze running into maze ; ill-boding thoughts
 Haunted my steps.—Perhaps my gallant friend,
 Discover'd to the *Danes*, this moment bleeds
 Beneath their swords ! or lies a breathless corse,
 The prey of midnight wolves.—Some mournful sound
 Strikes sudden on my sense.

S C E N E II.

ALFRED, ELTRUDA.

Eltruda. Here will I lean
 On this green bank, to wait the wish'd return
 Of morning and my lord.

Alfred.

Alfred. My gentle love,
Eltruda, why to this untimely sky
 Expose thy health? The dews of night fall fast:
 The chill breeze sighs aloud.

Eltruda. I could not rest.
 Can love repose when apprehension wakes,
 And whispers to the heart all dreadful things,
 That walk with night and solitude? Methought,
 In each low murmur of the woods, I heard
 Th' invading foe—or heard my *Alfred* groan!
 Our tender infants too—their fancy'd cries
 Still found within my ears!

Alfred. *Eltruda*, there
 I am a woman too: I who should cheer,
 And shelter thee from every care. My children!
 The thought of what may chance to them completes
 Their father's sum of woes. Oh, what safe shade
 Can screen their opening blossom from the storm
 That beats severe on us! Not sweeter buds
 The primrose in the vale, nor sooner shrinks
 At winter's churlish blast——

Elt. Behold, my lord—
 Good angels shield us—What a flood of brightness
 Waves round our heads!

Alfred. The Hermit moves this way.
 That wondrous man holds converse with the host
 Of higher natures. These far-beaming fires
 Were doubtless kindled up at his command.
 Be silent and attentive.

SCENE

S C E N E III.

ALFRED, ELTRUDA, HERMIT.

Hermit. I have heard
Thy fond complainings, *Alfred.*

Alfred. You have then,
Good father, heard the cause that wrings them from
me.

Hermit. The human race are sons of sorrow born :
And each must have his portion. Vulgar minds
Refuse, or crouch beneath their load : the brave
Bear theirs without repining.

Alfred. Who can bear
The shaft that wounds him thro' an infant's side ?
When whom we love, to whom we owe protection,
Implore the hand we cannot reach to save them ?

Hermit. Weep not, *Eltruda*—Yet thou art a king,
All private passions fall before that name.
Thy subjects claim thee whole.

Alfred. Can public trust,
O reverend sage ! destroy the softer ties
That twine around the parent's yearning heart,
That holy passion Heaven itself infus'd,
And blended with the stream that feeds our life.

Hermit. You love your children, prince—

Alfred. Lives there on earth,
In air, or ocean, creature tame or wild,
That has not known this universal love ?
All Nature feels it intimate and deep,
And all her sons of instinct or of reason.

Hermit. Then shew that passion in its noblest form.
Season their tender years with every virtue,

Social

Social or self-retir'd ; of public greatness,
Or lovely in the hour of private life ;
With all that can exalt, or can adorn
Their princely rank.

Alfred. Alas, their hope must swoop,
Such my unhappy fate, to humbler aims :
Affliction and base want must be their teachers.

Hermit. Affliction is the wholesome soil of virtue :
Where patience, honour, sweet humanity,
Calm fortitude, take root, and strongly flourish.
But prosperous fortune, that allures with pleasure,
Dazzles with pomp, and undermines with flattery,
Poisons the soil, and its best product kills.
Should'st thou regain thy throne—

Alfred. My throne ? What glimpse,
What smallest ray of hope—

Hermit. That day may come—
What do I feel ? My labouring breast expands,
To give the glorious inspiration room.
And now the cloud that o'er thy future fate,
Like total night, lay heavy and obscure,
Fades into air : and all the brightening scene
Dawns gay before me ! A long line of kings,
From thee descending, glorious and renown'd,
In shadowy pomp I see !

Genius of *England* ! hovering near,
In all thy radiant charms appear.

O come and summon, from the world unknown,
Those mighty chiefs, those sons of future fame,
Who, ages hence, this island shall adorn,
And spread to distant realms her glorious name.
Slow let the visionary forms arise,
And solemn pass before our wondering eyes.

[*Music*]

[*Music grand and awful. The Genius descending
sings the following*

S O N G.

*From those eternal regions bright,
Where suns, that never set in night,
Diffuse the golden day:
Where Spring unfading pours around,
O'er all the dew-impearled ground,
Her thousand colours gay:
Oh, whether on the fountain's flowery side,
Whence living waters glide,
Or in the fragrant grove,
Whose shade embosoms peace and love,
New pleasures all your hours employ,
And ravish every sense with every joy!
Great heirs of empire! yet unborn,
Who shall this island late adorn;
A monarch's drooping thought to cheer,
Appear! appear! appear!
Spirits of EDWARD III. PHILIPPA his queen,
and the Black Prince his son, arise.*

*Hermit. Alfred, look; and say,
What seest thou yonder?*

*Alfred. Three majestic shapes:
Two habited like mighty warriors old;
A third in whose bright aspect beauty smiles
More soft and feminine. A lucid veil
From her fair neck dependant floats around,
Light-hovering in the gale.*

*Hermit. O Alfred, man
Belov'd of Heaven, behold a king indeed;
Matchless*

Matchless in arms; in arts of peaceful rule,
 A sovereign's truest glory, yet more fam'd,
England's third *Edward*!—At his fear'd approach,
 Proud *France*, ev'n now, thro' all her dukedoms
 quakes.

Her Genius sighs: and from th' eternal shore,
 The soul of her great *Charles*, a recent guest,
 Looks back to earth, and mourns the distant woes,
 His realms are doom'd to feel from *Edward's* wrath.
 Beneath his standard, *Britain* shall go forth,
 Array'd for conquest, terrible in glory:
 And nations shrink before her. Oh, what deaths,
 What desolation shall her vengeance spread,
 From engines yet unsound; whose lightnings flash,
 Whose thunders roar, amazing, o'er the plain;
 As if this king had summon'd from on high
 Heaven's dread artillery to fight his battle!

Nor is renown in war his sole ambition:
 A nobler passion labours in his breast—
Alfred, attend—to make his people blest!
 The sacred rights that reason loudly claims
 For free-born men—these, *Alfred*, are his care:
 Oft to confirm, and fix them on the base
 Of equal laws.—O father of mankind!
 Successive praises from a grateful land
 Shall faint thy name for ever!

Alfred. Holy sage,
 Whom angels thus enlighten and inspire,
 My bosom kindles at thy heaven-born flame.
 Great *Edward*! be thy conquests and their praise
 Unrival'd to thyself. But, oh, thy fame
 For care paternal of the public weal!
 For *England* blest at home—my rapt heart pants
 To equal that renown!

Hermit. Know farther, *Alfred*;

A sovereign's great example forms a people.
The public breast is noble, or is vile,
As he inspires it. In this *Edward's* time,
Warm'd by his courage, by his honour rais'd,
High flames the *British* spirit like the sun,
To shine o'er half the globe: and, where it shines,
The cherish'd world to brighten and enrich.

Last, see this monarch in his hour of leisure;
Ev'n social on a throne, and tasting joys
To solitary greatness seldom known,
As friend, as husband, and as father blest.
That god-like *Youth* remark, his eldest hope,
Who gives new lustre to the name he bears;
A hero ere a man.—I see him now
On *Cressy's* glorious plain! The father's heart,
With anxious love and wonder at his daring,
Beats high in mingled transport. Great himself,
Great above *jealousy*, the guilty mark
That brands all meaner minds, see, he applauds
The *filial excellence*, and gives him scope
To blaze in his full brightness!—Lo, again
He sends him dreadful to a nobler field:
The danger and the glory all his own!
A *captive king*, the rival of his arms,
I see adorn his triumph! Heaven! what grace
What splendor from his gracious temper mild
That triumph draws! As gentle mercy kind,
He cheers the hostile prince whose fall he weeps!

Alfred. A son so rich in virtues, and so grac'd
With all that gives those virtues fair to shine,
When I would ask of Heaven some mighty boon,
Should claim the foremost place.

Hermit. Remember then,

What to thy infant sons from thee is due,
As parent and as prince.

Eltruda. Forgive me, Hermit,
Forgive a queen and wife her anxious fondness.
Yon beauteous shade, that, as I gaze her o'er,
My wonder draws, escapes your graver thought.

Hermit. O bright *Eltruda*! thou whose blooming
youth,

Whose amiable sweetness promise blessings
To *Alfred* and to *England*! see, and mark,
In yonder pleasing form, the best of wives,
The happiest too, repaid with all the faith,
With all the friendship, love and duty claim.
She, powerful o'er the heart her charms enslave—
O virtue rarely practis'd!—uses nobly

That happy influence, to prompt each purpose
Fair honour kindles in her *Edward's* breast.

Amid the pomps, the pleasures of a court,
Humble of heart, severely good; the friend
Of modest worth, the parent of the poor.

Eltruda! O transmit these noblest charms
To that fair daughter, that unfolding rose,
With which, * *as on this day*, Heaven crown'd your
loves.

The spirit of ELIZABETH arises.

Alfred. Say, who is she, in whom the noble graces,
Th' engaging manner, dignity and ease,
Are join'd with manly sense and resolution?

Hermit. The great *Eliza*. She, amid a world
That threatening swells in high commotion round her;

* *This masque was written to be acted at Clifden, on the birth-day of her Royal Highness the Princess Augusta.*

Each dangerous state her unrelenting foe,
 And chief a proud enormous empire stretch'd
 O'er half mankind; with not one friendly power,
 But what her kind creating hand shall raise
 From out the marshes of the branching *Rhine*;
 And min'd, at home, her ever-tottering throne
 By restless bigots, who, beneath the mask
 Of mild religion, are to every crime
 Set loose, the faithless sons of barbarous zeal:
 Yet she shall crown this happy isle with peace,
 With arts, with riches, grandeur and renown;
 And quell, by turns, the madness of her foes.
 As when the winds, from different quarters, urge
 The tempest on our shore; secure, the cliffs
 Repel its idle rage, and pour it back,
 In broken billows, foaming to the main.

Alfred. How shall she, Hermit, gain these glorious ends?

Hermit. By silent wisdom, whose informing power
 Works unperceiv'd; that seems in council slow;
 But, when resolv'd, and ripe for execution,
 That darts like lightning from the secret gloom:
 By ever seizing the right *point of view*,
 Her truest interest; which she firm pursues,
 With steady patience, thro' the maze of state,
 The storm of opposition, the mixt views,
 And thwarting manag'd passions of mankind:
 By healing the divisions of her people,
 And sowing that fell pest among her foes:
 By saving, from the vermin of a court,
 Her treasure; which, when fair occasion calls,
 She knows to lavish, in protecting arts,
 In guarding nations, and in nursing states:
 By calling up to power, and public life,

Each virtue, each ability : yet *she*,
 Amid the various worthies glowing round her,
 Still shines the first ; the central sun that wakes,
 That rules their every motion : not the slave,
 And passive property of her own creatures.
 But the great soul that animates her reign,
 That lights it to perfection, is the love,
 The confidence unbounded, which her wisdom,
 Her probity and justice, shall inspire
 Into the public breast. Hence cordial faith,
 Which nought can shake ; hence unexhausted treasure :

And hence, above all mercenary force,
 The hand that by the freeborn heart is rais'd,
 And guards the blended weal of Prince and People.
 She too shall raise *Britannia's* naval power ;
 Shall greatly ravish, from insulting *Spain*,
 The world-commanding sceptre of the deep.

Eltruda. O matchless queen ! O glory of her sex !
 The great idea, father, fills my soul,
 And bids it glow beyond a woman's passions.

Spirit of WILLIAM III. arises.

Hermit. Once more, O *Alfred*, raise thine eyes,
 and mark,

Who next adorns the scene, yon laurel'd *shade*.
 Ere yet the age that clos'd this female reign
 Hath led around its train of circling years,
 Shall *Britain* on the verge of ruin stand.
 A monarch, lost to greatness, to renown,
 The slave of dreaming monks, shall fill her throne.
 Weak and aspiring ; fond of lawless rule,
 The lawless rule his mean ambition covets
 Unequal to acquire. Yon prince thou saw'st,

To

To glory tutor'd by the hand severe
 Of sharp Adversity, shall Heaven upraise,
 And injur'd nations with joint call invoke,
 Their last, their only refuge. Lo! he comes:
 Wide o'er the billows of the boundless deep
 His navy rides triumphant: and the shores
 Of shouting *Albion* echo with his name,
 Immortal *William*! From before his face,
 Flies Superstition, flies oppressive Power,
 With vile Servility that crouch'd and kiss'd
 The whip he trembled at. From this great hour
 Shall *Britain* date her rights and laws restor'd:
 And one high purpose rule her sovereign's heart;
 To scourge the pride of *France*, that foe profess'd
 To *England* and to Freedom. Yet I see,
 From distant climes in peaceful triumph borne,
 Another KING arise! His early youth
 With verdant laurel crown'd, for deeds of arms
 That Reason's voice approves; for courage, rais'd
 Beyond all aid from passion, greatly calm!
 Intrepidly serene!—In days of peace,
 Around his throne the human virtues wait,
 And fair adorn him with their mildest beams;
 Good without show, above ambition great;
 Wise, equal, merciful, the friend of man!
 O *Alfred*! should thy fate, long ages hence,
 In meaning scenes recall'd, exalt the joy
 Of some glad festal day, before a *prince*
 Sprung from that king belov'd—Hear, gracious
 Heaven!
 Thy soft humanity, thy patriot heart,
 Thy manly virtue, steady, great, resolv'd,
 Be his supreme ambition! and with these,

The happiness, the glory, that await
Thy better days, be shower'd upon his head!

Alfred. O Hermit! thou hast rais'd me to new life!
New hopes, new triumphs, swell my bounding heart—

Hermit. It comes! it comes!—The promis'd scene
discloses!

Already the great work of Fate begins!
The mighty wheels are turning, whence will spread,
Beyond the limits of our narrow world,
The fair dominions, *Alfred*, of thy sons.
Behold the warrior bright with *Danish* spoils!—
The *raven* droops his wings—and, hark! the trumpet,
Exulting, speaks the rest.

S C E N E IV.

Symphony of martial music.

ALFRED, ELTRUDA, HERMIT, *Earl of Devon*,
followed by Soldiers.

Alfred. My friend return'd!
O welcome, welcome! but what happy tidings
Smile in thy cheerful countenance?—

Devon. My Liege,
Your troops have been successful. But to Heaven
Ascend the praise! For sure th' event exceeds
The hand of man.

Alfred. How was it, noble *Devon*?

Devon. You know my castle is not hence far distant.

Thither I sped: and in a *Danish* habit
The trenches passing, by a secret way,

Known

Known to myself alone, emerg'd at once
 Amid my joyful soldiers. There I found
 A generous few, the veteran, hardy gleanings
 Of many a hapless fight. They with a fierce
 Heroic fire inspirited each other;
 Resolv'd on death, disdaining to survive
 Their dearest country.—“If we fall, I cry'd,
 “Let us not tamely fall like passive cowards!
 “No: let us live—or let us die, like men!
 “Come on, my friends: to *Alfred* we will cut
 “Our glorious way; or, as we nobly perish,
 “Will offer to the genius of our country
 “Whole hecatombs of *Danes*.”—As if one soul
 Had mov'd them all, around their heads they flash'd
 Their flaming faulchions—“Lead us to those *Danes*!—
 “Our country!—vengeance!” was the general cry.
 Strait on the careless drowsy camp we rush'd:
 And rapid, as the flame devours the stubble,
 Bore down the heartless *Danes*. With this success
 Our enterprize increas'd. Not now contented
 To hew a passage thro' the flying herd;
 We, unremitting, urg'd a total rout.
 The valiant *Hubba* bites the bloody field,
 With twice six hundred *Danes* around him strow'd.
Alfred. My glorious friend!—this action has re-
 stor'd

Our sinking country—What reward can equal
 A deed so great?—Is not yon pictur'd *Raven*
 Their famous magic standard—Emblem fit
 To speak the savage genius of the people—
 That oft has scatter'd on our troops dismay,
 And feeble consternation?

Devon. 'Tis the same,
 Wrought by the sisters of the *Danish* king,

Of furious *Ivar*, in a midnight hour:
 While the sick moon, at their enchanted song,
 Wrapt in pale tempest, labour'd thro' the clouds,
 The *Demons* of destruction then, they say,
 Were all abroad, and mixing with the woof
 Their baleful power: The sisters ever sung;
 "Shake, standard, shake, this ruin on our foes!"

Hermit. So these infernal powers, with rays of
 truth,
 Stil deck their fables, to delude who trust them.

Alfred. But where, my noble cousin, are the rest
 Of your brave troops?

Devon. On t'other side the stream,
 That half incloses this retreat, I left them.
 Rous'd from the fear, with which it was congeal'd
 As in a frost, the country pours amain,
 The spirit of our ancestors is up,
 The spirit of the Free! and with a voice
 That breathes success, they all demand their king.

Alfred. Quick, let us join them, and improve their
 ardor.
 We cannot be too hasty to secure
 The glances of occasion.

S C E N E *the Last.*

To them CORIN, EMMA, *kneeling to* ALFRED.

Corin. Good my Liege,
 Pardon the poor unequal entertainment,
 Which we, unknowing—

Alfred. Rise, my honest shepherd,
 I came

I came to thee a peasant, not a prince :
 Thy rural entertainment was sincere,
 Plain, hospitable, kind : such as, I hope,
 Will ever mark the manners of this nation.
 You friendly lodg'd me, when by all deserted,
 And shall have ample recompence.

Corin. One boon,

Is all I crave.

Alfred. Good shepherd, speak thy wish.

Corin. Permission, in your wars, to serve your
 Grace :

For, tho' here lost in solitary shades,
 A simple swain, I bear an *English* heart ;
 A heart that burns with rage to see those *Danes*,
 Those foreign ruffians, those inhuman pirates,
 Oft our inferiors prov'd, thus lord it o'er us.

Alfred. Brave countryman, come on. 'Tis such
 as thou,

Who from affection serve, and free-born zeal,
 To guard whate'er is dear and sacred to them,
 That are a king's best honour and defence.

EMMA sings the following SONG.

I.

*If those, who live in shepherd's bower,
 Press not the rich and stately bed ;
 The new-mown hay and breathing flower
 A softer couch beneath them spread.*

II.

*If those, who sit at shepherd's board,
 Sooth not their taste by wanton art ;
 They take what Nature's gifts afford,
 And take it with a cheerful heart.*

III.

*If those, who drain the shepherd's bowl,
No high and sparkling wines can boast;
With wholesome cups they cheer the soul,
And crown them with the village toast.*

IV.

*If those, who join in shepherd's sport,
Gay-dancing on the daisy'd ground,
Have not the splendor of a court;
Yet love adorns the merry round.*

Alfred. My lov'd *Eltruda*! thou shalt here remain,
With gentle *Emma*, and this reverend Hermit.
Ye silver streams, that murmuring wind around
This dusky spot, to you I trust my all!

O close around her, woods! for her, ye vales,
Throw forth your flowers, you softest lap diffuse!

And *Thou*! whose secret and expansive hand
Moves all the springs of this vast universe:
Whose government astonishes; who here,
In a few hours, beyond our utmost hope,
Beyond our thought, yet doubting, hast clear'd up
The storm of fate; preserve what thy kind will,
Thy bountiful appointment, makes so dear
To human hearts! preserve my queen and children!
Preserve the hopes of *England*! while I go
To finish thy great work, and save my country.

Eltruda. Go, pay the debt of honour to the public.
If ever woman, *Alfred*, lov'd her husband
More fondly than herself, I claim that virtue,
That heart-felt happiness. Yet, by our loves
I swear, that in a glorious death with thee
I rather would be wrapt, than live long years.
To charm thee from the rugged paths of honour:

So

So much I think thee born for beauteous deeds,
And the bright course of glory.

Alfred. Matchless woman!

Love, at thy voice, is kindled to ambition.
Be this my dearest triumph, to approve me
A husband worthy of the best *Elfrida*!

Hermit. Behold, my lord, our venerable Bard,
Aged and blind, him whom the Muses favour.
Yet ere you go, in our lov'd country's praise,
That noblest theme, hear what his rapture breathes.

An O D E.

I.

*When Britain first, at Heaven's command,
Arose from out the azure main;
This was the charter of the land,
And guardian angels sung this strain:*
“Rule, Britannia, rule the waves;
“Britons never will be slaves.”

II.

*The nations not so blest as thee,
Must, in their turns, to tyrants fall:
While thou shalt flourish great and free,
The dread and envy of them all.*
“Rule, &c.

III.

*Still more majestic shalt thou rise,
More dreadful from each foreign stroke:
As the loud blast that tears the skies,
Serves but to root thy native oak.*
“Rule, &c.

IV.

*Thee haughty tyrants ne'er shall tame:
 All their attempts to bend thee down
 Will but arouse thy generous flame:
 But work their woe, and thy renown.
 "Rule, &c.*

V.

*To thee belongs the rural reign;
 Thy cities shall with commerce shine:
 All thine shall be the subject main:
 And every shore it circles thine.
 "Rule, &c.*

VI.

*The Muses, still with freedom found,
 Shall to thy happy coast repair:
 Blest isle! with matchless beauty crown'd,
 And manly hearts to guard the fair.
 "Rule, Britannia, rule the waves;
 "Britons never will be slaves."*

*Hermit. Alfred, go forth! lead on the radiant
 years,
 To thee reveal'd in vision.—Lo! they rise!
 Lo! patriots, heroes, sages, crowd to birth;
 And bards to sing them in immortal verse!
 I see thy commerce, Britain, grasp the world;
 All nations serve thee; every foreign flood,
 Subjected, pays its tribute to the Thames.
 Thither the golden South obedient pours
 His sunny treasures: thither the soft East
 Her spices, delicacies, gentle gifts:
 And thither his rough trade the stormy North.*

See,

See, where beyond the vast *Atlantic* surge,
By boldest keels untouch'd, a dreadful space !
Shores, yet unfound, arise ! in youthful prime,
With towering forests, mighty rivers crown'd :
These stoop to *Britain's* thunder. This new world,
Shook to its centre, trembles at her name :
And there her sons, with aim exalted, sow
The seeds of rising empire, arts, and arms.

Britons, proceed ; the subject deep command ;
Awe with your navies every hostile land.
Vain are their threats, their armies all are vain :
They rule the balanc'd world, who rule the main.

EDWARD and ELEONORA.

A

T R A G E D Y.

TO HER
ROYAL HIGHNESS
THE
Princess of *Wales*.

MADAM,

IF I take the liberty, once more, to
crave the protection of your ROYAL
HIGHNESS, for another Tragedy of my
writing, it is because I am led, almost
unavoidably, to it, by my subject. In
the character of ELEONORA I have endea-
voured to represent, however faintly, a
PRIN-

DEDICATION.

PRINCESS distinguished for all the virtues that render greatness amiable. I have aimed, particularly, to do justice to her inviolable affection and generous tenderness for a PRINCE, who was the darling of a great and free people.

Their descendants, even now, willown, with pleasure, how properly this address is made to your ROYAL HIGHNESS. I am, with the profoundest respect,

MADAM,

Your ROYAL HIGHNESS'S

Most humble, and

most devoted Servant,

JAMES THOMSON.

P R O L O G U E.

By a F R I E N D.

IN former times, when fierce religious rage,
And priestly sway deform'd each suffering age,
All manly wit, all useful learning lay
In darkness lost, nor hop'd returning day.
Religion then was stain'd by cruel deeds:
And free-born Reason stoop'd to craft and creeds.
But happier we!—And tho' to-night we show
What fatal ills from blind devotion flow,
'Tis not that we such rage renew'd can fear,
Or dread the hand of persecution here—
Our scene would wide humanity impart;
Would breathe extensive candour thro' the heart;
Show true religion ev'n to error kind,
And claim the perfect freedom of the mind.

If too the poet paints a noble strife
'Twixt the fond husband and the generous wife;
If all the father in his voice complains,
And all the mother in her tender strains;
If these best passions prompt the pleasing woe,
Indulge it freely——Nature bids it flow:
Where parent Nature leads, you cannot stray;
And what she wills, 'tis virtue to obey.

Fond

*Fond of BRITANNIA's fame, and just to You, }
He bids old English honour live anew,
And calls your great first EDWARD up to view.
But if his line too weak, his stroke too faint,
The graceful figure, in full light, to paint;
In candid part his honest meaning take,
And spare the poet for the hero's sake.*

EPILOGUE.

EPILOGUE.

By a FRIEND.

*THESE Poets are such fools!—The man behind,
Who wrote this play—a simple soul, I find—
Believes with all his heart, there was a wife,
Who needs would die—to save a husband's life!
He in the printed chronicles has read it:
And true it is—Sir Richard Baker said it.*

*Why, what an ass these books do make a man!
Read nature—then believe it—you who can.
Look round this town—the question is not—whether
Spouse dies for spouse: but who will live together?
Of old, they say, a husband was a lover:
But, thank our stars! those foolish days are over:
To such substantial prudence are we come,
We wed not heart to heart—but plumb to plumb.
What sense? what beauty? are not now the things:
But can he settle—up to what she brings?*

*Yet in this easy, all-forgiving age,
Bear with such moral fooleries—on the stage.
Perhaps too, there may be some gentle soul,
Who rather likes to weep—than win a vole;
Who thinks that there are charms in generous love,
And would to Edward Eleonora prove.*

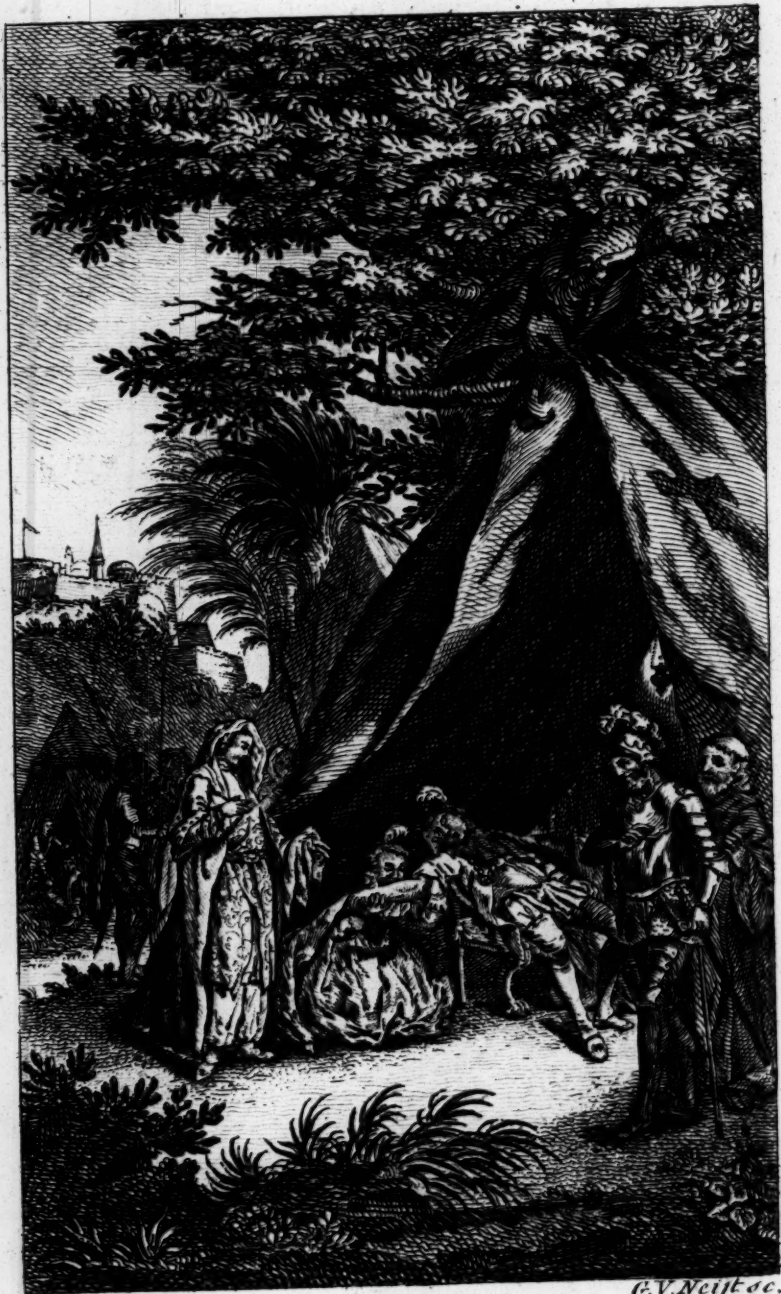
The

The Persons represented.

EDWARD, Prince of <i>England</i> ,	Mr. <i>Delane</i> .
EARL of <i>Gloster</i> ,	Mr. <i>Rosco</i>
THEALD, Archdeacon of <i>Liege</i> ,	Mr. <i>Roberts</i> .
SELIM, Sultan of <i>Jaffa</i> ,	Mr. <i>Ryan</i> .
ELEONORA, Princess of <i>England</i> ,	Mrs. <i>Horton</i> .
DARAXA, an <i>Arabian</i> Princess,	Mrs. <i>Hallam</i> .

Assassin, Officers, &c.

SCENE, EDWARD's tent in the camp before Jaffa,
a city on the coast of Palestine.



G.V. Neijt sc.

Edward and Eleonora .

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To

Edward and Eleonora.

A

T R A G E D Y.

A C T I. S C E N E I.

Prince EDWARD, *THE*ALD *Archdeacon* of
Liege, *Earl* of GLOSTER.

Edward. I WILL no longer doubt. 'Tis plain,
my friends,
That with our little band of *English* troops,
By all allies, all western powers deserted,
All but the noble knights that guard this land,
The flower of *Europe* and of Christian valour,
Nought can be done, nought worthy of our cause,
Worthy of *England's* heir, and of the name
Of *Lion-hearted* RICHARD; whose renown,
After almost a century elaps'd,
Shakes through its wide extent this eastern world.
What else could bend the *Saracen* to peace,
Who might, with better policy, refuse
To grant it us? yes, to the prince of *Jaffa*

I will

I will accord the peace he has demanded :
 And tho' my troops, impatient, wait the signal
 To storm yon walls, yet will I not expose,
 In vain attempts, valour that should be sav'd
 For better days, and for the public welfare.
 Rash fruitless war, from wanton glory wag'd,
 Is only splendid murder—What says *Theald* ?
 Approves my reverend father of my purpose ?

Theald. Edward, illustrious heir of England's crown,
 I must indeed be blinded with the zeal
 Of this our holy cause, to think your arms,
 Thus all-forsaken, thus betray'd, sufficient
 To reach the grandeur of your first design.
 And, from the yoke of infidels, to free
 The sacred city, object of our vows ;
 Yet this, methinks, this *Jaffa* might be seiz'd :
 That still were something, an auspicious omen
 Of future conquest—But, unskill'd in war,
 To you, my lord, and *Gloster's* wise experience,
 I this submit.

Edward. Speak, Gloster, your advice,
 Before I fix my latest resolution.

Gloster. You know, my lord, I never was a friend
 To this crusado. My unchang'd advice
 Is strenuous still for peace. Nor this, I urge,
 From our deserted arms, and cause betray'd,
 But from the state of our unhappy country.
 Behold her, *Edward*, with a filial eye,
 And say, is this a time for these adventures ?
 Behold her then with deep commotion shook,
 Beneath a false delusive face of quiet :
 Behold her bleeding yet from civil war,
 Exhausted, sunk ; drain'd by ten thousand arts
 Of lawless imposition, priestly fraud,

Italian leeches, and insatiate *Rome* ;
 That never rag'd before with such gross insult,
 With such abandon'd avarice. Besides,
 Who knows what evil counsellors, again,
 Are gather'd round the throne ! In times like these,
 Disturb'd, and lowring with unsettled freedom,
 One step to lawless power, one bold attempt
 Renew'd, the least infringement of our charters,
 Would in the giddy nation raise a tempest.
 Return, my prince. You have already sav'd
 Your father from his foes, from haughty *Leister* :
 Now save him from his ministers, from those
 Who hold him captive in the worst of chains—

Edward. You, *Gloster*, sav'd us both.

Gloster. I did my duty ;

E'en while I join'd with *Leister*, did my duty—
 I hope I did—He, who contends for freedom,
 Can ne'er be justly deem'd his sovereign's foe :
 No, 'tis the wretch that tempts him to subvert it,
 The soothing slave, the traitor in the bosom,
 Who best deserves that name ; he is a worm
 That eats out all the happiness of kingdoms.

Edward, return ; lose not a day, an hour,
 Before this city. Tho' your cause be holy,
 Believe me, 'tis a much more pious office,
 To save your father's old and broken years,
 His mild and easy temper, from the snares
 Of low corrupt insinuating traitors :
 A nobler office far ! on the firm base
 Of well-proportion'd liberty, to build
 The common quiet, happiness, and glory,
 Of king and people, *England's* rising grandeur.
 To you, my prince, this task, of right, belongs.
 Has not the royal heir a juster claim

To share his father's heart and inmost counsels,
Than aliens to his int'rest, those, who make
A property, a market of his honour?

One reason more allow me to suggest
For peace, immediate peace—should blind misfor-
tune,

In this far distant hostile land, oppress us ;
A chance to which our weakness stands expos'd ;
What, *Edward*, of thy princess would become,
Thy *Eleonora* ; she, whose tender love
Thro' stormy seas, and in fierce camps, attends thee ?
What of thy blooming offspring ? charg'd with these,
To give our courage scope were cruel rashness.

Edward. Enough, my lord ; I stand resolv'd on
peace ;

And will to *England* strait.—But where, alas !
Where shall we cover our inglorious heads ;
When gay with hope the people round us press,
To hear by what exploits we have sustain'd
The fame of *Richard*, and of *English* valour ?
Shall I, my generous country, I be rank'd
With those weak princes, who consume thy wealth,
And sink thy name in idle expeditions ?
Perfidious *France* ! Be this the ruling point
Of my whole life, and passion of my soul,
To humble thee, proud nation !—Meantime, *Gloster*,
See that the captive princess be restor'd,
Daraxa, to the sultan of this city,
Whose bride she is—We wage not war with women.

SCENE

SCENE II.

EDWARD, THEALD, GLOSTER, *an Officer belonging to the Prince.*

Officer. One from the prince of *Jaffa*, Sir, demands

Your secret ear on some important message.

Edward. Conduct him to my tent——

[*Officer goes out.*

He brings, I judge,

The sultan's last instructions for this peace.

Here wait: I may your faithful counsel want.

SCENE III.

THEALD, GLOSTER.

Theald. Whatever woes of late have clouded
England;

Yet must I, *Gloster*, call that nation happy,
On whose horizon smiles a dawning prince
Of *Edward's* worth and virtues.

Gloster. True, my friend;

Edward has great, has amiable virtues,
That virtue chiefly which befits a prince:
He loves the people he must one day rule;
With fondness loves them, with a noble pride;
Esteems their good, esteems their glory his.
One instance it becomes me to recount,
That shows the genuine greatness of his soul.

L 2

Tho'

Tho' I have met him in the bloody field,
 He fighting for his father, I for freedom;
 Yet bears his bosom no remaining grudge
 Of those distracted times: to me his heart
 Is greatly reconcil'd—Virtue! beyond
 The little unforgiving soul of tyrants!

Now will I tell thee, *Theald*, whence I stoop
 To wear the gaudy chains of court-attendance,
 At these grey years; that should in calm retirement
 Pass the soft evening of a bustling life,
 And plume my parting soul for better worlds.
 Amidst his many virtues, youthful *Edward*
 Is lofty, warm, and absolute of temper:
 I therefore seek to moderate his heat,
 To guide his fiery virtues, that, misled
 By dazzling power and flattering sycophants,
 Might finish what his father's weaker measures
 Have try'd in vain. And hence I here attend him,
 In expeditions which I ne'er approv'd,
 In holy wars—your pardon, reverend father—
 I must declare I think such wars the fruit
 Of idle courage or mistaken zeal,
 Sometimes of rapine and religious rage,
 To every mischief prompt.

Theald. You wrong, my lord,
 You wrong them much. To set this matter only
 Upon a civil footing: say, what right
 Had robbers, rushing from *Arabian* deserts,
 Fierce as the suns that kindled up their rage,
 Thus, in a barbarous torrent, to bear down
 All *Asia*, *Afric*, and profane their altars?
 And to repel brute force by force is just.
 Nay, does not e'en our duty, int'rest, glory,
 The common honour of the Christian name,
 Require

Require us to repress their wild ambition,
That labours westward still, and threatens *Europe*?

Gloster. Yes, when they burst their limits, let us
check them :

And with a firmer hand than those loose Christians,
The most corrupt and abject of mankind,
Slaves, doubly slaves, who suffered these *Arabians*,
In virtue their superiors as in valour,
Without resistance to o'er-run the world.
By rage and zeal, 'tis true, their empire rose :
But now some settled ages of possession
Create a right, than which, I fear, few nations
Can show a better. Sure I am 'tis madness,
Inhuman madness, thus, from half the world,
To drain its blood and treasure, to neglect
Each art of peace, each care of government ;
And all for what ? By spreading desolation,
Rapine, and slaughter, o'er the other half,
To gain a conquest we can never hold.

I venerate this land. Those sacred hills,
Those vales, those cities, trod by saints and prophets,
By God himself, the scenes of heavenly wonders,
Inspire me with a certain awful joy.
But the same God, my friend, pervades, sustains,
Surrounds, and fills, this universal frame ;
And every land where spreads his vital presence,
His all-enlivening breath, to me is holy.

Excuse me, *Theald*, if I go too far :
I meant alone to say, I think these wars
A kind of persecution. And when that,
That most absurd and cruel of all vices,
Is once begun, where shall it find an end ?
Each in his turn or has or claims a right

To wield its dagger, to return its furies;
And, first or last, they fall upon ourselves.

EDWARD *behind the Scenes.*

Inhuman villain! is thy message murder?

Theald. Ha! heard you not the prince exclaiming
murder?

Gloster. Should this barbarian messenger—

[Moving towards the noise.

'Tis so!

S C E N E I V .

THEALD, GLOSTER; to them prince EDWARD,
wounded in the arm, and dragging in the assassin.

Edward. Detested wretch! And does the prince
of *Jaffa*

Send base assassins to transact his treaties?

There—take thy answer, ruffian!

[Stabs him with the dagger he had wrested from him.

Blow too hasty!

I should have fav'd thee for a fitter death.

Assassin. I would have triumph'd, Christian, in thy
rage.

For know, thou vile destroyer of the faithful!

That tho' my erring dagger miss'd thy heart,

Yet has it fir'd thy veins with mortal poison,

Whose very touch is death—ALLAH be prais'd!

O glorious fate! Prophet, receive my soul. *[Dies.*

Edward. *(after a short pause.)* Why gaze you with
amazement on each other?

Are

Are we not men to whom the various chances
Of life are known ?

Gloster. Ha ! poison ! did he say ?
Then is at once my prince and country lost !
O fatal wound to *England* !

Theald. Quick, my lord,
Retire and have it dress'd, without delay ;
Ere the fell poison can diffuse its rage,
And deeply taint your blood.

Edward. The princess comes !
O save me from her tenderness !

SCENE V.

EDWARD, THEALD, GLOSTER ; to them the
princess ELEONORA.

Eleon. My Edward !
Support me !—Oh !
Edward. She faints—My *Eleonora*,
Look up, and bless me with thy gentle eyes !—
The colour comes, her cheeks resume their beauty,
And all her charms revive—Hence, spurn that carcass :
A sight too shocking for my *Eleonora*.

Eleon. And lives my *Edward*, lives my dearest
lord,
From this assassin sav'd ?—Alas ! you bleed !

Edward. 'Tis nought, my lovely princess !—A
slight wound—

Eleon. But, ah ! methought, I entering heard of
poison,
Tainting the blood—What ! was the dagger poi-
son'd ?—

L 4

Ha !

Ha! silent all! will none relieve my fears?—

Gloster. Madam, restrain your tenderness a moment—

The prince delays too long—Let him retire.
 Meanwhile the troubled camp shall be my care;
 Lest the base foe should make a sudden sally,
 While yet our troops are stunn'd with this disaster.

Edward. I thank thee, noble *Gloster*. Nor alone

Support my troops; go, rouse them to revenge;
 Tell them their injur'd prince will try their love,
 Their valour soon—And you, my friend, good *Theald*,
 Attend the princess—Chear thee, *Eleonora*!
 I cannot, will not, leave thee long, to vex
 Thy tender soul with aggravated fears,
Theald. Behold *Daraxa*, the false sultan's bride.

SCENE VI.

ELEONORA, THEALD, DARAXA.

Daraxa. Princess of *England*, let me share thy grief.

Whence flow these tears? and what this wild alarm,
 This noise of murder and assassination?

Eleon. Alas! the prince is wounded by a ruffian;
 And with a poison'd dagger, as I fear,
 Yet none will ease me of this racking thought—
 Nay, tell me, *Theald*, since to know the worst
 Is oft a kind of miserable comfort;
 What has befall'n the prince? For this slight wound
 Could never thus o'ercast the brave with terror.

Theald.

Theald. I dare not, princess, dally with your fate.
 An impious villain, from the sultan *Selim*,
 Pretended to the prince a secret message,
 About the peace in treaty. Dreading nought,
 He left us here, and to his tent retir'd,
 There to receive this execrable envoy.
 Strait with the prince alone, the fierce assassin
 Attempted on his life; but, in his arm,
 He took, it seems, the blow, and from the villain
 Wrestring the dagger, plung'd it to his heart.
 This last we saw, and heard th' inhuman bigot,
 Who deem'd himself a martyr in their cause,
 Boast, as he dy'd, the prince's wound was poison'd—

Eleon. Then all I fear'd is true! then am I
 wretched,
 Beyond ev'n hope!

Daraxa. A villain from the sultan!—

Eleon. Ah, the distracting thought! And is my
 life!

My love! my *Edward*! on the brink of fate!
 Of fate that may this moment snatch him from me!

Daraxa. What! *Selim* send assassins! and beneath
 A name so sacred! *Selim*, whose renown
 Is incense breathing o'er the sweeten'd East;
 For each humane, each generous virtue fam'd;
Selim! the rock of faith! and sun of honour!

Eleon. O complicated woe! The Christian cause
 Has now no more a patron, and restorer;
England no more a prince, in whom she plac'd
 Her glory, her delight, her only hope;
 These desolated troops no more a chief;
 No more a husband, a protector, I,
 A friend, a lover! and my helpless children
 No more a father!

Daraxa. Pardon, gentle princess,
If, in this whirlwind of revolving passions,
That snatch my soul by turns, I have forgot
To pay the tribute which I owe thy sorrows—
But I myself, alas! am more unhappy!

Eleon. What woes can equal mine? who lose, thus
vilely,
The best! the bravest! loveliest of mankind!—

Daraxa. You only *lose* the man you love; but I,
O insupportable! must learn to *bate*,
To *scorn* what once was all my pride and transport!
Should *Edward* die by this accursed crime,
(Which Heaven forbid!) he dies admir'd, *belov'd*,
In the full bloom of fame and spotless honour.
To you, the daughter of illustrious grief,
Your tears remain, and sadly sweet reflection;
You with his image, with his virtues, still,
Amidst the pensive gloom, may converse hold:
While I—Ah! nothing meets my blasted sight
But a black view of infamy and horror!
What is the loss of life to loss of virtue!—
And yet how can this heavenly spark be lost?
No! virtue burns with an immortal flame.
He is bely'd—some villain has abus'd him.

Therald. I honour, Madam, this your virtuous grief:
But that the sultan did employ th' assassin
Is past all doubt—Behold the false instructions,
By which he gain'd admittance.

[Giving her the letter the prince had dropt.]

Daraxa. Ha!—'Tis so!
His hand! his seal!—From my detesting heart,
I tear him thus for ever!—Perish *Selim*!
Perish the feeble wretch, who more bewails him!
That were to share his guilt—Unhappy princess!

Now

Now let me turn my soul to thy assistance—
There is a cure, 'tis true——

Eleon. A cure, *Daraxa*!

O say, what cure?

Daraxa. No; it avails not, Madam;
None can be found to risque it.

Eleon. None to risque it?

Quick tell me what it is, my dear *Daraxa*.

Daraxa. To find some person, that, with friendly
lip,

May draw the poison forth; at least, its rage
And mortal spirit. This will bring the wound
Within the power of art: but certain death
Attends the generous deed.

Eleon. [*kneeling.*] Then hear me, Heaven!
Prime source of love! Ye saints and angels, hear me!
I here devote me for the best of men,
Of princes and of husbands. On this cross
I seal the cordial vow: confirm it Heaven!
And grant me courage in the hour of trial!

Theald. O tenderness unequal'd!

Daraxa. Glorious princess!

Eleon. Go, *Theald*, quickly find the earl of *Gloster*,
And with him break this matter to the prince.
As for the person, leave that task to me.
I with *Daraxa* will your call attend;
O all ye powers of love, your influence lend!

The End of the First Act.

 A C T II. S C E N E I.

GLOSTER, THEALD.

Gloster. **N**O, *Theald*, no ; he never will consent—
I know him well ; he ne'er will purchase life,

At such a rate : besides, in aid of love,
His generous pride would come, and deem it baseness.

Theald. Then is yon sun his last. The black'ning
wound

Begins already to confess the poison—
Meanwhile, my lord, both friendship and our duty
Demand, at least, the trial. Well I know,
That, poise his life with hers, he would as nothing
Esteem his own : but sure the life of thousands,
The mingled cause at once of heaven and earth,
Should o'er the best, the dearest life prevail.

Gloster. Alas ! my friend, you *reason*, *Edward* loves.
How weak the head contending with the heart !
Yet be the trial made—Behold he comes.

S C E N E II.

EDWARD, GLOSTER, THEALD.

Edw. [*entering.*] O thou bright sun ! now hast'ning
to those climes,
That parent-isle, which I no more shall see ;

And

And for whose welfare oft my youthful heart
Has vainly form'd so many a fond design;
O thither bear, resplendent orb of day,
To that dear spot of earth, my last farewell!

And oh! eternal Providence, whose course,
Amidst the various maze of life, is fix'd
By boundless wisdom, and by boundless love,
I follow thee, with resignation, hope,
With confidence and joy; for thou art good,
And of thy rising goodness is no end!

Well met, my dearest friends!—It was too true,
The villain's threat'ning, and I nearly touch
That awful hour which every man must prove,
Yet every man still shifts at distance from him.
Come then, and let us fill the space between
These last important moments, whence we take
Our latest tincture for eternity,
With solemn converse and exalting friendship—
Nay—*Theald*—*Gloster*—wound me not with tears,
With tears that fall o'er venerable cheeks!
What could the princess more?—Ah! there, indeed,
At every thought of her, I feel a weight,
A dreadful weight of tenderness, that shakes
My firmest resolution—Where is she?

Theald. She burns with fond impatience to attend
you.

Edw. And how, brave *Gloster*, did you leave the
camp?

Gloster. The camp, Sir, is secure: each soldier
there

From indignation draws new force and spirit.

O 'tis a glorious, an affecting sight!

Those furrow'd cheeks, that never knew before

The

The dew of tears, now in a copious shower
 Are bath'd. Around your tent they, anxious, crowd,
 Rank over rank: some pressing for a look;
 Some sadly musing, with dejected eye;
 Some, on their knees, preferring vows to heaven;
 And, with extended arm, some breathing vengeance.
 "Base *Saracens*, they cry, perfidious cowards!
 "But blood shall wash out blood—Ah! poor atone-
 "ment,

"Did the whole bleeding city fall a victim!"

Edw. Alas, that to repay their faithful love
 I cannot live!—Yet moderate their zeal;
 And let the sword of justice only strike
 'The faithless *Selim*, and his guilty council.
 My new-departed spirit, just escap'd
 From the low fev'rish passions of this life,
 Would grieve to see the blood of innocence
 With that of guilt confounded, stain my tomb.

Theald. Permit me, Sir, the hope, that you your-
 self——

I speak it on just cause—may live to punish
 This breach of all the sacred rights of men.

Edw. Why will you turn my thoughts, from
 earth enlarg'd,

To soft enfeebling views of life again?

Theald. Not to a vain desire of life, my lord,
 I would recall them; but inspire each hope,
 Advise each possibility to save it.
 And there is yet a remedy.

Edw. Delusion!

Theald. The fair *Arabian* princess mention'd one.

Edw. She one!—*Daraxa*!—something to com-
 plete

Her lover's crimes.

Theald.

Theald. You could not wrong her thus,
Had you beheld the tempest of her soul,
Her grief, her rage, confusion, when she heard
Of *Selim's* baseness; had you seen that honour,
That glorious fire which darted from her eyes;
Till, in a flood of virtuous sorrow sunk,
She almost equal'd *Eleonora's* tears.

Edw. What was it she propos'd?

Theald. It was, my lord,
To find some person, who, with friendly lip,
Might draw the deadly spirit——

Edw. I have heard
Of such a cure; but is it not, good *Theald*,
An action fatal to the kind performer?

Theald. Yes, surely fatal.

Edw. Name it then no more.
I should despise the paltry life it purchas'd.
Besides, what mortal can dispose so rashly
Of his own life? Talk not of low condition,
And of my public rank: when life or death
Becomes the question, all distinctions vanish;
Then the first monarch and the lowest slave
On the same level stand, in this the sons
Of equal Nature all.

Theald. Allow me, Sir,
If 'tis a certain, an establish'd duty,
Than duty more, the height of human virtue,
To sacrifice a transitory life,
For that kind source from whence it is deriv'd,
And all its guarded joys, our dearest country;
It may be justly sacrific'd for those
On whom depends the welfare of the public.
And there is one, my lord, who stands devoted,
By solemn and irrevocable vows,
To die for you.

Edw.

Edw. To die for me!—Kind Nature!
 Thanks to thy forming hand, I can myself,
 Cheerful, sustain to pay this debt I owe thee,
 Without the borrow'd sufferings of another.
 No, *Theald*, urge this argument no more.
 I love not life to that degree, to purchase,
 By the sure death of some brave guiltless friend,
 A few uncertain days, that often rise,
 Like this, serene and gay, when, with swift wing,
 A moment wraps them in disastrous fate.

Gloster. Did we consult to save your single life,
 Was that the present question, thy refusal
 Were just, were generous. But, my lord, this person,
 Who stands for you devoted, should, in that,
 Be deem'd devoted for the christian cause,
 The common cause of *Europe* and thy country;
 Dies for the brave companions of thy fortune,
 Who weeping now around thy tent conjure thee
 To live for them, and *England's* promis'd glory.
 O save our country, *Edward*! save a nation,
 The chosen land, the last retreat of freedom,
 Amidst a world enslav'd!—Cast back thy view,
 And trace from farthest times her old renown.
 Think of the blood that, to maintain her rights,
 And guard her sheltering laws, has flow'd in battle,
 Or on the patriot's scaffold. Think what cares,
 What vigilance, what toils, what bright contention,
 In councils, camps, and well-disputed senates,
 It cost our generous ancestors, to raise
 A matchless plan of freedom: whence we shine,
 Ev'n in the jealous eye of hostile nations,
 The happiest of mankind.—Then see all this,
 This virtue, wisdom, toil, and blood of ages,

Behold

Behold it ready to be lost for ever.

In this important, this decisive hour,
On thee, and thee alone, our weeping country
Turns her distressful eye; to thee she calls,
And with a helpless parent's piercing voice.
Wilt thou not live for her? for her subdue
A graceful pride, I own, but still a pride,
That more becomes thy courage and thy youth
Than birth and public station? Nay, for her,
Say, would'st thou not resign the dearest passions?

Edw. O, there is nothing, which for thee, my
country,

I, in my proper person, could not suffer!
But thus to sculk behind another's life,
'Tis what I have not courage to support,
It makes a kind of coward of me, *Gloster*.
But let me see this friend, whose generous virtue
Exceeds what ev'n my favourable thoughts
Had imag'd in the selfish race of man.
The purpose claims the merit of the deed;
And ere I die I must requite his friendship.
Conduct him hither, *Theald*.

SCENE III.

EDWARD, GLOSTER.

Edward. Ah, my *Gloster*,
You have not touch'd on something that here pleads
For longer life, beyond the force of reason,
Perhaps too powerful pleads—my *Eleonora*!
To thee, my friend, I will not be ashamed

Ev'n

Ev'n to avow my love in all its fondness,
 For, oh, there shines in this my dearer self!
 This partner of my soul! such a mild light
 Of careless charms, of unaffected beauty,
 Such more than beauty, such endearing goodness,
 That when I meet her eye, where cordial faith,
 And every gentle virtue mix their lustre,
 I feel a transport that partakes of anguish!
 How shall I then behold her, on the point
 To leave her, *Gloster*, in a distant land?
 For ever in a stormy world to leave her?
 There is no misery to be fear'd like that
 Which from our greatest happiness proceeds!

S C E N E IV.

EDWARD, GLOSTER, THEALD *presenting the princess ELEONORA as the person he went to bring,*
 DARAXA.

Edw. O Heaven!—what do I see?—I am betray'd!— [Turning away.

Eleon. Edward!

Edw. O, 'tis too much! O spare me, Nature!

Eleon. Not look upon me, *Edward*?

Edw. *Eleonora*?

How on this dreadful errand canst thou come?

Eleon. Behold me kneel——

Edw. Why kneel you, best of women!

You ne'er offended, ne'er in thought offended!

Thou art all truth, and love, and angel-goodness!

Why do you kneel? O rise, my *Eleonora*!

Eleon. Let me fulfil my vow.

Edw.

Edw. O never! never!

Eleon. Let me preserve a life, in which is wrapt
The life of thousands, dearer than my own!
Live thou, and let me die for thee, my *Edward*!

Edw. For me!—thy words are daggers to my
soul.

And would'st thou have me then thus meanly save
A despicable life? a life expos'd
To that worst torment, to my own contempt!
A life still-haunted by the cruel image,
Of thy last pangs, thy agonizing throws,
The dire convulsions of these tender limbs;
And all for one—O infamy!—for one,
By love, by duty bound, each manly tie,
Ev'n by a peasant's honour to protect thee?
Yet this, tho' strong, invincible, is nought
To what my wounded tenderness could urge
Against thy dire request—But should Fate demand
The life we love, then, then, we must exert
The greatest act of human resignation,
We must submit. But would'st thou have me, say,
Doom thee myself? with voluntary choice,
Nay, by a barbarous crime, untimely snatch
This worst of ills? Would *Eleonora* make me
Of all mankind the most completely wretched?

Eleon. Plead not the voice of honour. Well I
know,

There is no danger, pain, no form of death,
Thou would'st not meet with transport to protect me.
But I, alas! an unimportant woman,
Whose only boast and merit is to love thee;
Ah, what am I, with nameless numbers weigh'd?
With myriads yet unborn? All ranks, all ages,
All arts, all virtues, all a state comprizes?

These

These have a higher claim to thy protection.
 Live then for them.—O make a generous effort!
 What none but heroes can, bid the soft passions,
 The private stoop to those that grasp the public.
 Live to possess the pleasure of a God,
 To bless a people trusted to thy care.
 Live to fulfill thy long career of glory,
 But just begun. To die for thee be mine.
 I ne'er can find a brighter, happier fate:
 And fate will come at last, inglorious fate!
 O grudge me not a portion of thy fame!
 As join'd in love, O raise me to thy glory!

Edw. In vain is all thy eloquence. The more
 Thou would'st persuade, I with increasing horror
 Fly from thy purpose.

Eleon. Dost thou love me, *Edward*?

Edw. Oh! If I love thee?—Witness heaven and
 earth!

Angels of death that hover round me, witness!
 Witness these blinded eyes, these trembling arms;
 This heart that beats unutterable fondness,
 To what an agony I love thee—

Eleon. Then

Thou sure wilt save me from the worst of pains.

Edw. O that I could from all engross thy suffer-
 ings!

Pain felt for thee were pleasure!

Eleon. Hear me, *Edward*!

I speak the strictest truth, no flight of passion,
 I speak my naked heart—To die, I own,
 Is a dread passage, terrible to Nature
 Chiefly to those who have, like me, been happy.—
 But to survive thee—O, 'tis greatly worse!
 'Tis a continual death! I cannot bear

The

The very thought—O leave me not behind thee!

Edw. Since nought can alter my determin'd breast,
Why dost thou pierce me with this killing image?

Eleon. Ah! selfish that thou art! with thee the toil,
The tedious toil of life will soon be o'er;
Thou soon wilt hide thee in the quiet grave;
While I, a lonely widow, with my orphans,
Am left defenceless to a troubled world,
A false, ungrateful, and injurious world!—
Oh! if thou lov'st me, *Edward*, I conjure thee,
By that celestial flame which blends our souls!
By all a father, all a mother feels!
By every holy tenderness! I charge thee,
Live to protect the pledges of our love,
Our children!—

Edw. Oh!—

Eleon. Our young, our helpless—

Edw. Oh!—

Distraction!—Let me go!

Eleon. Nay, drag me with thee—
To the kind tomb—Thou canst not leave our children!
Expos'd, by being thine, beyond the lowest!
Surrounded with the perils of a throne!—

Edw. Cruel! no more embitter thus our last,
Our parting moments! Set no more the terrors
Of these best passions in array against me!
For by that Power, I swear, Father of life!
Whose universal love embraces all
That breathes this ample air; whose perfect wisdom
Brings light from darkness, and from evil good;
To whom I recommend thee, and my children;
By whom I swear! I never will submit
To what thy horrid tenderness proposes!

Gloster.

Gloster. My lord——

Edw. Oh!—these emotions are too much—
I feel a heavy langour steal upon me:
The working poison clogs the springs of life.
Conduct me to my couch—Ah! *Eleonora!*
If we ne'er meet again—This one embrace—
Yet sink not to despair—Heaven may preserve me
By means superior to all human hope.
Eleon. I will not, cannot quit thee!——

SCENE V.

ELEONORA, DARAXA.

Daraxa. Princess, stay.
Think not the hand of death is yet upon him,
Resistless sleep will first oppress his senses,
Before the last convulsive pangs come on;
For so the numming poison oft begins
To spread its dark malignity.——

Eleon. Ha!—Sleep?—
Then is the time—Thanks to inspiring Heaven!
But come, and ere the venom sink too deep,
Swift let me seize the favouring hour of sleep.

The End of the Second Act.

ACT

ACT III. SCENE I.

Gloft. O Miracle of love! O wond'rous princefs!
'Tis fuch as thou, who keep the gentle
flame,

That animates fociety, alive,
Who make the dwellings of mankind delightful. |
What is vain life? an idle flight of days,
A ftill-delufive round of fickly joys,
A fcene of little cares and trifling paffions,
If not ennobled by fuch deeds of virtue.
And yet this matchlefs virtue! what avails it?
'Th' afflicting angel has forfook the prince,
And now pours out his terrors on the princefs.
Forfook him, faid I?—No; he muft awake
To keener evils than the body knows,
Which minds alone, and generous minds, can feel.
O Virtue! Virtue! as thy joys excell,
So are thy woes transcendent; the grofs world
Knows not the blifs or mifery of either—

The prince forfakes his couch—He feems renew'd
In health—Ah, fhort deceitful gleam of eafe!

SCENE II.

EDWARD, GLOSTER.

Edw. [*advancing from his couch.*] Hail to the frefter
earth and brighter day!
I feel me lighten'd of the mortal load

That

That lay upon my spirits. This kind sleep
Has shed a balmy quiet thro' my veins.
Whence this amazing change? —

But be my first chief care, Author of good!
To bend my soul in gratitude to thee!
Thou, when blind mortals wander thro' the deeps
Of comfortless despair, with timely hand,
Invisible, and by unthought-of ways,
Thus lead'st them forth into thy light again.

Gloster. How fares my lord, the prince?

Edw. To health restor'd.

Only a kind of lassitude remains,
A not unpleasing weakness hangs upon me:
Like the soft trembling of the settled deep,
After a storm.

Gloster. Father of health be prais'd!

Edw. The moment that I sunk upon my couch,
A sick and troubled slumber fell upon me;
Chaos of gloomy unconnected thought!
That, in black eddy whirl'd, made sleep more dread-
ful

Than the worst waking pang. While thus I tofs'd,
Ready to bid farewell to suffering clay,
Methought an angel came and touch'd my wound.
At this the parting gloom clear'd up apace;
My slumbers soften'd; and, with health, return'd
Serenity of mind, and order'd thought,
And fair ideas gladdening all the soul.
Aërial music too, by fancy heard,
Sooth'd my late pangs and harmoniz'd my breast.
Thro' shades of bliss I walk'd, where heavenly forms
Sung to their lutes my *Eleonora's* love—
But where is she? the glory of her sex!

O dearer, justly dearer, far than ever!

Quick, let me find her, pour into her bosom
My full, full soul, with tendernefs o'ercharg'd,
With glad surprise, with gratitude and wonder.—

Ha! why this silence? this dejected look?

You cast a drooping eye upon the ground.

Where is the princess?

Gloster. She, my lord, repofes.

Edw. Repofes?—No!—It is not likely, *Gloster*,
That ſhe would yield her weeping eyes to ſleep,
While I lay there in agonies—away!
Say, is ſhe well?

Gloster. Now ſhow thy courage, *Edward*—

Edw. O all my fears! I ſhall ſtart out to madnefs!
What!—while I ſlept?

Gloster. Yes——

Edw. Miſery! diſtraction!

My peace, my honour, is betray'd for ever!

O love! O ſhame! O murder'd *Eleonora*!

SCENE III.

Gloster. Unhappy prince! go find thy *Eleonora*,
And in heart-eaſing grief exhale thy paſſion:
All other comfort, now, were to talk down
The winds and raging ſeas.—But yonder comes
Th' *Arabian* princeſs. From her tears I learn
The moving ſcene within.

SCENE IV.

GLOSTER, DARAXA, a Messenger from SELIM, attending at some distance.

Daraxa. O! 'tis too much!
I can no more support it.

Gloster. Generous mourner,
How is it with the princess *Eleonora*?

Daraxa. Struck by the poison on her couch she lies,

A rose soft-drooping in *Sabea* vales,
Beneath the fiery dog-star's noxious rage.
O Christian chief, I never shall forget
The scene these melting eyes have just beheld,
With mingled tears of tenderness and wonder.

Gloster. How was it, Madam?

Daraxa. When this pride of women,
This best of wives which in his radiant course
The sun beholds, when first she, sickening, felt
Th' imperious summons of approaching fate,
All rob'd in spotless white she sought the altar;
And, prostrate there, for her departing soul,
The prince her husband, and her orphan-children,
Implor'd th' Eternal Mind.—As yet she held
Her swelling tears, and in her bosom kept
Her sighs repress'd: nor did the near approach
Of the pale king of terrors dim her beauty;
No, rather adding to her charms, it breath'd
A certain mournful sweetness thro' her features.
But as th' increasing bane more desperate grew,
Wild to her bed she rush'd, and then, indeed,

The

The lovely fountains of her eyes were open'd,
 Then flow'd her tears.—“Connubial bed,” she cry'd,
 “Chaste witness of my tenderness for him,
 “To save whose life I unrepining die,
 “In bloom of youth, farewell!—Thou shalt, perhaps,
 “Receive a fairer, a more happy bride;
 “But never a more faithful, never one
 “Who loves her husband with a fonder passion.”
 Here flow'd her tears afresh; with burning lip
 She press'd the humid couch, and wept again.
 At last, while weary sorrow paus'd, she rose,
 And, fearing lest immediate death might seize her,
 Demanded to be led to see the prince:
 But fear of chasing from his eyes, too soon,
 The salutary sleep that heal'd his pangs,
 Restrain'd her trembling footsteps. On her couch,
 Abandon'd to despair, she sunk anew,
 And for her children call'd. Her children came.
 A while, supported on her arm, she ey'd them,
 With tears pursuing tears a-down her cheek,
 With all the speechless misery of woe—
 I see her still—O God!—the powerful image
 Dissolves me into tears!

Gloster. Madam, proceed.

Such tears are virtue, and excel the joys
 Of wanton pride.

Daraxa. Then starting up, she went
 To snatch them to a mother's last embrace;
 When strait, reflecting that the piercing poison
 Might taint their tender years, she sudden shrunk
 With horror back—“O wretched *Eleonora*!
 “(She weeping cry'd) and must I then not taste
 “The poor remaining comfort of the dying,
 “To see a husband, clasp my dearest children,

M 2

“And

“ And mix my parting soul with theirs I love ?”
 Her sad attendants, that till then had mourn’d
 In silent sorrow all, at This, gave way
 To loud laments—She rais’d her languid eye,
 And casting on them round a gracious smile,
 To each by name she call’d, ev’n to the lowest,
 To each extended mild her friendly hand,
 Gave, and, by turns, receiv’d a last farewell.
 Such is the dreadful scene from which I come.

Gloster. How heighten’d now with *Edward’s*
 mingled woes !

Why are my lingering years reserv’d for this ?

Daraxa. Come nearer, you, the messenger of *Selim*,
 And bear him back this answer—His chief aim,
 He says, in stooping to solicit peace,
 Was from the chains of infidels to save me.
 What ! was it then to rescue me he sent,
 Beneath an all-rever’d and sacred name,
 Beneath the shelter of his hand and seal,
 A murdering wretch, a sacrilegious bigot,
 To stab at once the gallant prince of *England*,
 And public faith ? nay, with a poison’d dagger
 (Such his inhuman cowardice) to stab him ?
 So well, ’tis true, he judg’d ; the Christian prince
 Had now been mingled with the harmless dead ;
 If his bright princess, glorious *Eleonora*,
 Had not redeem’d his dearer life with hers.
 You heard in what extremity she lies.
 Go, tell the tyrant then—O heaven and earth !
 O vanity of virtue ! that *Daraxa*
 Should e’er to *Selim* send so fell a message—
 I will suppress its bitterness—Yet tell him,
 This crime has plac’d eternal bars between us.

See

See my last tear to love—— *Arabian wilds*
 Shall bury 'midst their rocks the lost *Daraxa*.
 Away!

Gloster. Behold, they bear this way the princess,
 Once more to taste the sweetness of the sun,
 Ere yet to mortal light she bid farewell.

SCENE V.

GLOSTER, DARAXA, THEALD, EDWARD, ELEONORA borne in by her Attendants on a couch.

Eleon. [*entering*.] A little on, a little further on,
 Bear me, my friends, into the cooling air.

☉ cheerful sun! O vital light of day!

Edw. That sun is witness of our matchless woes,
 Is witness of our innocence——Alas!
 What have we done to merit this disaster?

Eleon. O earth! O genial roofs! O the dear coast
 Of *Albion's* isle! which I no more shall see!——

Edw. Nay, yield not to thy weakness, *Eleonora*!
 Sustain thyself a little, nor desert me!

Th' all-ruling Goodness may relieve us still.

Eleon. *Edward*! I tremble! terror seizes on me!
 Thro' the rent veil of yon surrounding sky,
 I had a glimpse, I saw th' eternal world,
 They call, they urge me hence—Yes, I obey.
 But O forgive me, Heaven! if 'tis with pain,
 With agonies, I tear my soul from his!

Edw. Heavens! what I suffer!—How thy plaintive voice
 Shoots anguish through my soul!

Eleon. Some Power unseen—

M 3

Thy

Thy hand, my *Edward*—some dark power unseen
Is dragging me away—O yet a little,
A little, spare me!—Ah! how shall I leave
My weeping friends, my husband, and my children?

Edw. Unhappy friends! O greatly wretched husband!

And O poor careless orphans, who not feel
The depth of your misfortune!

Eleon. Lay me down;
Soft, lay me down—my powers are all dissolv'd—
A little forward bend me—Oh!

Edw. Oh Heav'n!
How that soft frame is torn with cruel pangs!
Pangs robb'd from me!

Eleon. 'Tis thence they borrow ease—
My children! O my children! you no more
Have now a mother; now, alas! no more
Have you a mother, O my hapless children!

Edw. What do I hear! What desolating words
Are these? more bitter than a thousand deaths!
Death to my soul! Call up thy failing spirit,
And leave me not to misery and ruin!

Eleon. *Edward*, I feel an interval of ease:
And, ere I die, have something to impart
That will relieve my sufferings.

Edw. Speak, my soul!
Speak thy desire: I live but to fulfill it.

Eleon. Thou seest in what a hopeless state I lie,
I who this morning rose in pride of youth,
High-blooming, promis'd many happy years.
I die for thee, I self-devoted die.
Think not, from this, that I repent my vow:
Or that, with little vanity, I boast it:

No;

No; what I did from unrepenting love
 I cheerful did, from love that knows no fear,
 No pain, no weak remission of its ardour.
 And what, alas! what was it but the dictate
 Of honour and of duty? nay, 'twas selfish,
 To save me from unsufferable pain,
 From dragging here a wretched life without thee.
 Two fears yet stand betwixt my soul and peace.
 One is for thee, lest thou disturb my grave
 With tears of wild despair. Grieve not like those
 Who have no hope. We yet shall meet again;
 We still are in a kind Creator's hand;
 Eternal Goodness reigns. Besides, this parting,
 This parting, *Edward*, must have come at last,
 When years of friendship had, perhaps, exalted
 Our love, if that can be, to keener anguish.
 Think what thy station, what thy fame demanded;
 Nor yield thy virtue ev'n to worthy passions.
 My other care—my other care is idle—
 From that thy equal tenderness with mine,
 Thy love and generosity secure me.
 Our children——

Edw. Yes, I penetrate thy fear.

But hear me, dying sweetness! On this hand,
 This cold pale hand I vow, our children never,
 Shall never call another by the name
 Sacred to thee; my *Eleonora's* children
 Shall never feel the hateful power thou fear'st.
 As one in life, so death cannot divide us.
 Nor high descent, nor beauty, nought that woman,
 In her unbounded vanity of heart,
 Can wish, shall ever tempt my faith from thee.
 Shall ever, said I? Piteous boast indeed!

M 4.

O no.

O nothing *can*!—I should be gross of heart,
 Tasteless and dull as earth, to think with patience,
 Without abhorrence, of a second *Hymen*.
 Where can I find such beauty? Where such grace,
 The soul of beauty? where such winning charms?
 Where such a soft divinity of goodness?
 Such faith? such love? such tenderness unequal'd?
 Such all that Heaven could give—to make me wretched!
 Talk not of comfort—Into what a gulph
 A lone abyss of misery I fall,
 The moment that I lose thee—Oh! I know not!
 I dare not think!—But these unhappy orphans—
 Ah, the dire cause that makes it double duty—
 These pledges of our love, I will attempt
 To brave the horrors of loath'd life without thee.

Eleon. Enough! it is enough! On this condition
 Receive them from my hands.

Edw. Dear hands! dear gift!
 Dear, precious, dying, miserable gift!
 With transport once receiv'd, but now with anguish!

Eleon. All-soft'ning time will heal my woes. The
 dead
 Soon leave the passions of the living free.

Edw. Detested life!—O take me, take me with
 thee!

Eleon. No, *Edward*, live; or else I die in vain.

Edw. Raise, raise, my *Eleonora*, thy sweet eyes,
 Once more behold thy children—

Eleon. Oh!—'Tis darkness—
 A deadly weight———

Edw. Thou leav'st me then for ever!

Eleon. Where am I?—Ah!—a tenant still to pain.
 The quivering flame of life leaps up a little.

Meantime,

Meantime, my *Edward*, 'tis my last request,
That thou would'st leave me, while I yet enjoy
A parting gleam of thought—Leave me to Heaven!—

Gloster—farewel—Be careful of the prince—
Attend him hence—and double now thy friendship!

Edw. Barbarian! off!—Ah! whither would'st thou
drag me!

Gloster. My lord, in pity to the princess—

Edw. Oh!

Eleon. Farewell! farewell!—Receive my last adieu,

Edward! my dearest lord! farewell for ever!

Edw. O word of horror!—Can I?—No! I cannot!

There, take me, lead me, hurl me to perdition!

SCENE VI.

ELEONORA, DARAXA, THEALD, *Attendants.*

Eleon. 'Tis past, the bitterness of death is past—
Alas! *Daraxa*, I can ne'er requite
Thy generous cares for me. Thou art the cause
My *Edward* lives, my children have a father,
Thy heaven-inspir'd proposal—Tell him, *Theald*,
That, in the troubled moments of our parting,
I had forgot to beg he would restore
Thr' *Arabian* princess to her friends and country—
Thy hand—This sure, howe'er in faith we differ,
Humanity, the soul of all religion,
May well permit.

Daraxa. By Virtue's sacred fire!
Our paradise, the garden of the blest,

M 5

Ne'er

Ne'er smil'd upon a purer soul than thine.

For me, think not of me; such are my woes,
That I disdain all care, detest relief:

My name is trod in dust; thine beams for ever,
The richest gem that crowns the worth of woman.

Eleon. The guilt of *Selim* cannot stain thy virtues:
It rather lends them lustre—Bear me back,
My dear attendants: and, good *Theald*, come,
Come, aid my mounting soul to spring away,
From the lov'd fetters of this kindred clay.

The End of the Third Act.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

THEALD, and a Gentleman belonging to him.

Theald. **T**O me a dervise? Thro' the furious
camp,
Yet raging at the perfidy of *Selim*,
How did he safely pass?

Gent. Sir, he had fallen
A victim to their vengeance: but he told them,
His life was of importance to the prince,
That he, who struck him, stabb'd the heart of *Edward*.
This stay'd their rage; then, after a strict search,
They let him pass thro' ranks of glaring eyes.
I have besides to say, an *English* ship,

And

And one from *Italy*, are just arriv'd :
 The first brings great dispatches to prince *Edward*;
 'The other, *holy father*, these to you. [Kneeling.
Theald. Go, bid this dervise enter.

SCENE II.

THEALD: he opens and looks on the Dispatches.

Awful Heaven!

Great ruler of the various heart of man!
 Since thou hast rais'd me to conduct thy church,
 Without the base cabal too often practis'd,
 Beyond my wish, my thought, give me the lights,
 The virtues, which that sacred trust requires :
 A loving, lov'd, untterrifying power,
 Such as becomes a father; humble wisdom;
 Plain, primitive sincerity; kind zeal,
 For truth and virtue rather than opinions;
 And, above all, the charitable soul
 Of healing peace and Christian moderation.—
 The dervise comes.

SCENE III.

THEALD, SELIM disguised as a Dervise.

Theald. With me, what would'st thou, dervise

Selim. The princess *Eleonora* lives she still?

M 6

Theald.

Theald. She lives, and that is all.

Selim. Allah be prais'd!

Then lives the honour of the bright'ning name
Of *Saracen* and *Mussulman*.

Theald. How, dervise!

What can wipe out the horror of this deed?

Selim. The deed was execrable; but my hand
This instant shall prevent its dire effect.
I bring a certain remedy for poison;
Nor can it come too late, while wandering life
Yet, with faint impulse, stirs along the veins.

Theald. Ha! dervise, art thou sure of what thou
say'st?

Selim. Christian, I am; and therefore am I here.
Haste, lead me to the princess: tho' she lay
Ev'n in the last extremity, tho' call'd
By the fierce angel who compels the dead,
Yet bold experience gives me room to hope.
Oft have I seen its vital touch diffuse
New vigour thro' the poison'd streams of life,
When almost settled into dead stagnation;
Swift as a Southern gale unbinds the flood.
Say, wilt thou trust me with the trial, Christian.

Theald. Thou know'st, we have great reason for
distrust;

But fear in those who can no longer hope
Were idle and absurd.

Selim. Bright Heaven! what fear?
Is there a slave of such inhuman baseness
To add fresh outrage to a dying princess?
For virtue dying? Look into my eye:
Does one weak ray there shun the keenest gaze?
Say, dost thou there behold so foul a bottom?

Theald.

Theald. No; seeming truth and generous candour
shine
In what thou say'st. Come, follow me, good dervise.

SCENE IV.

THEALD, SELIM *disguised*, DARAXA.

Daraxa. At last, through various pangs the dying
princess
Sees the delivering moment, and demands
Thy presence, reverend Christian.
Theald. Dervise, come.
Forbid it Heaven this aid should be too late!

SCENE V.

DARAXA.

Heaven! can it be! the very face of *Selim*!
'Tis he himself—I know him, 'tis the sultan;
And, as he shot athwart me, from his eye
Flash'd the proud lightning of affronted virtue.
He must be innocent; his being here
Is radiant proof he must—O weak Daraxa!
What man of virtue more would deign to lodge
His image in thy breast? Ah! what avails
The light unfounded love, the treacherous friendship,
That, with inhuman cowardice, gives up
A worthy

A worthy man to infamy and slander?
They talk'd of aid—what aid?

[*A cry heard within.*

Alas, 'tis past!

Death must be in that cry. O let me fly
To snatch one parting look; but see the prince,
Rous'd by the sounds of sorrow, this way comes.
Unhappy prince! I venerate his tears—
O gracious Allah! pity and support him. [Exit.

SCENE VI.

EDWARD.

That cry was death: Alas! she is no more!
The matchless *Eleonora* is no more!—
Where am I?—Heavens!—Ah! what a hideous de-
sart

Is now this world, this blasted world around me!
O sun, I hate thee, I abhor thy light,
That shews not *Eleonora*! Earth, thy joy,
Thy sweetness all is fled, all, all, that made
Thy ways to me delightful, *Eleonora*!
O *Eleonora*! perish'd *Eleonora*!
For ever lost!—That tent! ah me! that tent!

[*Going into the tent, starts back.*

I dare not enter there. There death displays
His utmost terrors—Pale and lifeless, there,
She lies, whose looks were love, whose beauty smil'd
The sweet effulgence of endearing virtue—
And here I last beheld her—Ay and how,

I

And

And how beheld her?—The remorseless image
Will haunt me to the grave—I see her suffering
With female softness, yet to pain superior,
Fearful and bold at once, with the strong hand
Of mighty love constraining feeble nature,
To steal me from affliction—Let me fly
This fatal ground—But whither shall I fly?
To *England*—O I cannot bear the thought
Of e'er returning to that country more!
That country, witness of our happy days,
Where at each step remember'd bliss will sting
My soul to anguish. I already hear
Malice exclaim, nay, blushing Valour sigh:
Where is thy princess? where the wish of thousands?
The charm, the transport of the public eye?
Base prince! And art thou not ashamed to bring
No trophy home but *Eleonora's* corse?—
The grave too is shut up, that last retreat
Of wretched mortals—Yes, my word is pass'd,
To *Eleonora* pass'd. Our orphan children
Bind me to life—O dear, O dangerous passions!
The valiant, in himself, what can he suffer?
Or what does he regard his single woes?
But when, alas, he multiplies himself
To dearer selves, to the lov'd tender fair,
To those whose bliss, whose beings hang upon him,
To helpless children! then, O then! he feels
The point of misery festering in his heart,
And weakly weeps his fortune like a coward.
Such, such am I! undone!—

SCENE

SCENE VII.

EDWARD, GLOSTER.

Edward. My lord of *Gloster*,
I thought my orders were to be alone.

Gloster. Forgive my fond intrusion—But I cannot
Be so regardless of thy welfare, *Edward*,
As to obey these orders.

Edward. But they shall,
Shall be obey'd—I will enjoy my sorrows,
All that is left me now.

Gloster. The more thy grief,
Just in its cause, but frantic in degree,
Seeks aggravating solitude, the more
It suits my love and duty to attend thee,
To try to sooth—

Edward. Away! thou never shalt.
Not all that idle wisdom can suggest,
All the vain talk of proud unfeeling reason,
Shall rob me of one tear.

Gloster. Of Nature's tears
I would not rob thee: they invigorate virtue,
Softens, at once, and fortify the heart;
But when they rise to speak this desperate language,
They then grow tears of weakness; yes—

Edward. I care not!
Weakness, whate'er they be, I will indulge them,
Will, in despite of thee and all mankind,
Devote my joyless days for ever to them.

Gloster. Reason and virtue then are empty names?

Edward. Hence ! leave me to my fate—You have undone me ;

You have made shipwreck of my peace among you,
My happiness, and honour ; and I now
Roam the detested world, a cureless wretch !

Gloster. Thy honour yet is safe, how long I know
not,

For full it drives upon the rocks of passion.
O all ye pitying powers that rule mankind !
Who so unworthy but may proudly deck him
With this fair-weather virtue, that exults,
Glad, o'er the summer main ? The tempest comes,
The rough winds rage aloud ; when from the helm
This virtue shrinks, and in a corner lies
Lamenting—Heavens ! if privileg'd from trial,
How cheap a thing were virtue !

Edward. Do—insult me—
Rail, spare me not—rail, *Gloster*, all the world—
But know, mean time, thou canst not make me feel
thee—

I have no more connection with mankind.

Gloster. Insult thee, *Edward* ? Do these tears in-
sult thee ?

These old man's tears !—Friendship, my prince, can
weep,

As well as love—But while I weep thy fortune,
Let me not weep thy virtue sunk beneath it—
Thou hast no more connection with mankind !
Put off thy craving senses, the deep wants
And infinite dependencies of nature ;
Put off that strongest passion of the soul,
Soul of the soul, love to society ;
Put off all gratitude for what is past,

All generous hope of what is yet to come;
 Put off each sense of honour and of duty:
 Then use this language—Let me tell thee, *Edward*,
 Thou hast connections with mankind, and great ones,
 Thou know'st not of; connections! that might rouse
 The smallest spark of honour in thy breast,
 To wide-awaken'd life and fair ambition.

Edward. What dost thou mean?

Gloster. What mean?—this day, in *England*,
 How many ask of *Palestine* their king,
Edward, their king?—Read these—

EDWARD, opening the dispatches.

O *Gloster*!—*Gloster*!—

Alas! my royal father is no more!
 The gentlest of mankind, the most abus'd!
 Of gracious nature, a fit soil for virtues,
 'Till there his creatures sow'd their flattering lies,
 And made him—No, not all their curs'd arts
 Could ever make him insolent or cruel:
 O my deluded father! little joy
 Hadst thou in life, led from thy real good,
 And genuine glory, from thy people's love,
 That noblest aim of kings, by smiling traitors.

Thus weak of heart, thus desolate of soul,
 Ah, how unfit am I, with steady hand,
 To rule a troubled state!—She, she is gone,
 Softener of care, the dear reward of toil,
 The source of virtue! She, who to a crown
 Had lent new splendor, who had grac'd a throne
 Like the sweet seraph Mercy tempering Justice,
 O *Eleonora*! any life with thee,
 The plainest could have charm'd: but pomp and
 pleasure,

All

All that a loving people can bestow,
By thee unshar'd, will only serve to fret
The wounds of woe, and make me more unhappy !

Gloster. Now, is the time, now list thy soul to
virtue !

Behold a crisis, sent by Heaven, to save thee.
Whate'er, my prince, can touch, or can command,
Can quicken or exalt the heart of man,
Now speaks to thine—Thy children claim their father,
Nay, more than father, claim their double parent ;
For such thy promise was to *Eleonora* :
Thy subjects claim their king, thy troops their chief :
The manes of thy ancestors consign
Their long-descended glory to thy hands :
And thy dejected country calls upon thee
To save her, raise her, to restore her honour,
To spread her sure dominion o'er the deep,
And bid her yet arise the scourge of *France*.
Angels themselves might envy thee the joy,
That waits thy will, of doing general good :
Of spreading virtue, cheering lonely worth ;
Of dashing down the proud ; of guarding arts,
The sacred rights of industry and freedom ;
Of making a whole generous people happy.
O *Edward* ! *Edward* ! the most piercing transports
Of the best love can never equal these !
And need I add—Thy *Eleonora*'s death
Calls out for vengeance ?——

Edward. Ha !

Gloster. If thou, indeed,
Dost honour thus her memory, then shew it,
Not by soft tears and womanish complaints,
But shew it like a man !——

Edward. I will !

Gloster.

Gloster. Yon towers !—

Edward. 'Tis true !

Gloster. Yon guilty towers !

Edward. Insult us still !

Gloster. The murderer of thy princess riots there !

Edward. But shall not long !—Thou art my better genius,

Thou brave old man ! thou hast recall'd my virtue—

I was benumb'd with sorrow—what—or where—

I know not—never to have thought of this.

Bright Virtue welcome ! vigour of the mind !

The flame from Heaven that lights up higher being !

Thrice welcome ! with thy noble servant Anger,

And just Revenge—Hence let us to the camp,

And there transfuse our soul into the troops.

This sultan's blood will ease my fever'd breast.

Yes, I will take such vengeance on this city,

That all mankind shall turn their eyes to *Jaffa* ;

And, as they see her turrets sunk in dust,

Shall learn to dread the terrors of the just.

The End of the Fourth Act.

ACT V. SCENE I.

SELIM.

Selim. **O** My *Daraxa* ! thou hast charm'd my
soul !

This reconciling interview has sooth'd

My troubled bosom into tender joy :

As when the spring first, on the soften'd top

Of *Lebanon*, unbinds her lovely tresses,

And shakes her blooming sweets from *Carmel's* brow--

It only now remains to see the prince.—

SCENE

SCENE II.

SELIM, THEALD.

Theald. I fought thee, worthy dervise.

Selim. Reverend Christian,
My toiling thoughts can find no fix'd repose,
Till the wrong'd sultan's vindicated honour
Shine out as bright as yon unfully'd sky.
Conduct me to the prince—I claim that justice.—
It stings my conscious soul with sick impatience,
To think what *Selim* suffers. For a man,
Who loves the ways of truth and open virtue,
To lye beneath the burning imputation
Of baseness and of crimes—such horrid crimes!—
O 'tis a keen unsufferable torment!
Come, let me then discharge this other part
Of my commission.

Theald. That thou soon shalt do.
He strait will come this way, the king of *England*,
Such now he is. Mean time, 'tis fit to tell thee,
He must be manag'd gently: for his passions
Are all abroad, in wild confusion hurl'd:
The winds, the floods, and lightning mix together.
I need not say how little, in this uproar,
Avails the broken thwarted light of reason.

Selim. Fear not.—I trust in innocence and truth.

Theald. He cannot long delay, for, as I enter'd,
I saw him parting from the hurried camp,
That lighten'd wide around him: burnish'd helms,
And glittering spears, and ardent thronging soldiers,
Demanding all the signal, when to storm
These walls devoted to their vengeance.—

Selim.

Selim. Ha !

Then let us quickly find him—But he comes.

S C E N E III.

SELM, THEALD, EDWARD, GLOSTER.

Edward. Whence is it those barbarians, here again,
 Those base, those murdering cowards, dare be seen ?
 What new accurs'd attempt is now on foot ?
 What new assassination ?—Start not, dervise,
 Tinge not thy caitiff cheek with red'ning honour.
 What thou !—Dost thou pretend to feel reproach ?
 Art thou not of a shameless race of people,
 Harden'd in arts of cruelty and blood,
 Perfidious all ? Yes, have you not profan'd
 The faith of nations, broke the holy tie
 That binds the families of earth together,
 That gives ev'n foes to meet with generous trust,
 And teaches war security ? Your prince,
 Your prince has done it ! And you should hereafter
 Be hunted from your dens like savage beasts,
 Be crush'd like serpents !

Theald. Sir, this dervise comes,
 To clear the sultan *Selim* from that crime,
 Which you, with strong appearance, charge upon him.

Edward. Appearance, *Theald* ! with unquestion'd
 proof.

Doubtless the villain would be glad to change
 The course by Nature fix'd, enjoy his crimes
 Without their evil—But he shall not 'scape me !

Selim.

Selim. If, king of *England*, in this weighty matter,
On which depends the weal and life of thousands,
You love and seek the truth, let reason judge,
Cool, steady, quiet, and dispassion'd reason.
For never yet, since the proud selfish race
Of men began to jar, did passion give,
Nor ever can it give, a right decision.

Edward. Reason has judg'd, and passion shall
chastise,

Shall make you howl, ye cowards of the *East*!
What can be dearer? This vile prince of *Jaffa*?
This infamy of princes! sends a ruffian,
By his own hand and seal commission'd, sends him,
To treat of peace: and, as I read his letters,
The villain stabs me—This, if this wants light,
There is no certainty in human reason;
If this not shines with all-convincing truth,
Yon sun is dark—And yet these cowards come
With lying shifts, and low elusive arts—
O, it inflames my anger into madness!
This added insult on our understanding,
This treacherous attempt to steal away
The only joy and treasure of my life,
Sweet sacred vengeance for my murder'd princess.

Selim. The cursed wretch who did assail thy life,
O king of *England*, was indeed an envoy
Sent by the prince of *Jaffa*: This we own:
But then he was an execrable bigot,
Who, for such horrid purposes, had crept
Into the cheated sultan's court and service,
As by the traitor's papers we have learn'd.
For know, there lives, upon the craggy cliffs
Of wild *Phœnician* mountains, a dire race,

A nation

A nation of assassins. Dreadful zeal,
 Fierce and intolerant of all religion
 That differs from their own, is the black soul
 Of that infernal state. Soon as their chief,
 The Old Man (so they style him) of the mountains,
 Gives out his baleful will, however fell,
 However wicked and abhorr'd it be,
 Tho' cloath'd in danger, the most cruel death,
 They, swift and silent, glide thro' every land,
 As fly the gloomy ministers of vengeance,
 Famine, and plague; they lie for years conceal'd,
 Make light of oaths, nay, sometimes change religion,
 And never fail to execute his orders;
 Of these the villain was, these ruffian saints,
 The curse of earth, the terror of mankind:
 And thy engagement, prince, in this crusado,
 That was the reason whence they fought thy life.

Edward. False, false as hell! the lye of guilty
 fear!

You all are bigots, robbers, ruffians all!
 It is the very genius of your nation.
 Vindictive rage, the thirst of blood consumes you:
 You live by rapine, thence your empire rose;
 And your religion is a mere pretence
 To rob and murder in the name of Heaven.

Selim. Be patient, prince, be more humane and
 just.

You have your virtues, have your vices too;
 And we have ours. The liberal hand of Nature
 Has not created us, nor any nation,
 Beneath the blessed canopy of heaven,
 Of such malignant clay, but each may boast
 Their native virtues, and their Maker's bounty.

You

You call us bigots.—O! canst thou with that
Reproach us, Christian prince? What brought thee
hither?

What else but bigotry? What dost thou here?
What else but persecute?—the truth is great,
Greater than thou, and I will give it way;
Ev'n thou thyself, in all thy rage, wilt hear it—
From their remotest source, these holy wars,
What have they breath'd but bigotry and rapine?
Did not the first *Crusaders*, when their zeal
Should have shone out the purest, did they not,
Led by the frantic hermit who began
The murderous trade, thro' their own countries spread
The woes their vice could not reserve for ours?

Tho' this exceeds the purport of my message;
Yet must I, thus insulted in my country,
Insulted in religion, bid thee think,
O king of *England*, on the different conduct
Of *Saracens* and *Christians*, when beneath
Your pious *Godfrey*, in the first crusado,
Jerusalem was sack'd, and when beneath
Our generous *Saladin* it was retaken——
O hideous scene! my soul within me shrinks,
Abhorrent, from the view!——Twelve thousand
wretches,
Receiv'd to mercy, void of all defence,
Trusting to plighted faith, to purchas'd safety,
Behold these naked wretches, in cold blood,
Men, women, children, murder'd, basely murder'd!
The holy temple, which you came to rescue,
Re-gorges with the barbarous profanation.
The streets run dismal torrents. Drown'd in blood
The very foldier sickens at his carnage.

VOL. II.

N

Could't

Could'st thou, O sun, behold the blasting sight,
 And lift again thy sacred eye on mortals?
 A ruthless race! Who can do this, can do it,
 To please the general Father of mankind!
 While nobler *Saladin*—

Edward. Away! be gone!
 With thee, vile dervise, what have I to do?
 I lose my hour of vengeance, I debase me,
 To hold this talk with thee.

Selim. While truth and reason
 Speak from my tongue, vile dervise as I am,
 Yet am I greater than the highest monarch,
 Who, from blind fury, grows the slave of passion.
 Besides, I come to justify a prince,
 Howe'er in other qualities below thee,
 In love of goodness, truth, humanity,
 And honour, Sir, thy equal;—yes, thy equal!—

Edward. What! how! compare me with a damn'd
 assassin!

A matchless villain!—Ha! presumptuous dervise!
 Thou gnaw'st thy quivering lip—A smother'd passion
 Shakes thro' thy frame.—What villainy is that
 Thou dar'st not utter?—Wert thou not a wretch,
 Protected by thy habit, this right hand
 Should crush thee into atoms—Hence! away!
 Go tell thy master that I hold him base,
 Beyond the power of words to speak his baseness!
 A coward! an assassinating coward!
 And when I once have dragg'd him from his city,
 Which I will straitway do—I then will make him,
 In all the gall and bitterness of guilt,
 Grinding the vengeful steel betwixt his teeth,
 Will make the traitor own it.

I

SELIM,

SELIM, *discovering himself.*
Never!

Edward. Ha!

Selim. Thou canst not, haughty monarch:—I am
he!

I am this *Selim*! this insulted *Selim*!

Yet clear as day, and will confound thy passion.

Edward. Thou *Selim*!

Selim. I.

Edward. Was ever guilt so bold?

Selim. Did ever innocence descend to fear?

Edward. This bears some shew of honour. Wilt
thou then

Decide it by the sword?

Selim. I will do more——

Edward. How more?

Selim. Decide it by superior reason.

Edward. No weak evasions!——

Selim. If I not convince thee,

If by thyself I am not of this crime

Acquitted, then I grant thee thy demand.

Nay more, yon yielded city shall be thine:

For know, hot prince, I should disdain a throne,

I could not fill with honour. Were I guilty,

I should not tremble at thy threatening voice;

No, 'tis myself I fear.

Edward. What shall I think?

Selim. Hear but one witness, and I ask no more,

To clear my name. The witness is a woman,

Her looks are truth, fair uncorrupted faith

Beams from her eyes. Thou ne'er canst doubt such
beauty:

For 'tis th' expression of a spotless soul.

N 2

Edward.

Edward. Curse on thy mean luxurious eastern
arts

Of cowardice! Thou would'st seduce my vengeance—
But I detest all beauty—Barbarous sultan!
Ah! thou hast murder'd beauty! thy fell crime—
Haste, *Gloster*, haste—in sight of camp and city,
Prepare the lists—Now show thyself a prince,
Or die in shameful tortures like a slave.

Selim. I came not hither or to dread thy wrath,
Or court thy mercy.

Gloster. Sir, you cannot justly
Refuse him his demand. The fervent soul
Of undissembled innocence, methinks,
Is felt in what he says. First hear this person;
And, if she gives not full conviction, then,
Have then recourse to what should always be
The last appeal of reasonable beings,
Brute force.

Edward. Well then, conduct her hither, sultan—
[*Selim goes out.*]

Ah! my disorder'd mind! from thought to thought,
Uncertain, toss'd, the wreck of stormy passion!
This rage a while supports me; but I feel
It will desert me soon, and I again
Shall soon relapse to misery and weakness.
O *Eleonora*! little didst thou think,
How deeply wretched thy dire gift of life
Would make me!

S C E N E IV.

EDWARD, GLOSTER; THEALD; to them SELIM
conducting ELEONORA, DARAXA.

Selim. Raise thy eyes, O king of *England*,
To the bright witness of my blameless honour.

Edward.

Edward. No ; beauty shall no more engage my eyes,

It shall no more profane the shrine devoted

To the sweet image of my *Eleonora*!

Let her declare her knowledge in this matter.

Eleon. Will not my *Edward* bless me with a look ?

Edward. What angel borrows *Eleonora*'s voice !—

O thou pale shade of her I weep for ever !

Permit me thus to worship thee—Thou art !—

Amazing Heaven !—Thou art my *Eleonora* !

My *Eleonora*'s self ! my dear, my true,

My living *Eleonora* !—What—to whom

Owe I this miracle ? this better life ?—

Oppressive joy !—owe I my *Eleonora* ?

Eleon. To him, that generous prince, who put
his life,

His honour, on the desperate risque to save me ;

When in the arms of death—Depriv'd of voice,

Of motion, and of sense, benumb'd I lay,

My frighted train around me thought me dead,

And fill'd the tent with cries ; my heart alone

Still feebly beat ; but soon the poison's force

Had driv'n out life from that its last retreat ;

If, in the moment of approaching fate,

He, like my guardian angel, had not brought

An antidote of wondrous power, by which

I am to light restor'd—to thee, my *Edward* !

Edward. Did he, did he preserve thee ! He,
whom thus

I have with such inhuman pride insulted !

O blind, O brutish, O injurious rage !

They, they are wise, who, when they feel thy mad-
ness,

Seal up their lips. And canst thou then forgive me,
 Thou who hast o'er me gain'd that noblest triumph,
 The triumph of humanity?—Thou canst;
 'Tis easier for the generous to forgive,
 Than for offence to ask it.

Selim. Use not, prince,
 So harsh a word. More than forgive, I love
 Thy noble heat, thy beautiful disorder.
 O! I am too much man, I feel, myself,
 'Too much the charming force of human passions,
 E'er to pretend, with supercilious brow,
 With proud affected virtue, to disdain them.

Edward. How, generous sultan, how shall I re-
 quite thee?
 Here—Take thy lov'd *Daraxa*, whom I meant
 To have restor'd, when this misfortune happen'd;
 But secret working Heaven ordain'd her stay,
 To save us all.

Selim. Wert thou the lord of earth,
 Thou could'st not give me more!—my dear *Daraxa*!

Edward. Hence to the camp, my *Gloster*—Bid
 the soldiers
 Forfake the trenches—Let unbounded joy
 Reign, fearless, o'er the mingled camp and city—
 Go, tell my faithful soldiers, that their queen,
 My *Eleonora*, lives! A prize beyond
 The chance of war to give! She lives to soften
 My too imperious temper, and to make them,
 To make my people happy!—O my soul!
 What love e'er equal'd thine? O dearest! best!
 Pride of thy sex! inimitable goodness!
 Whenever woman henceforth shall be prais'd
 For conjugal affection, men will say,

There

There shine the virtues of an *Eleonora*!
Transporting bliss!—How bountiful is Heaven!
Depressing often, but to raise us more.
Let never those despair who follow virtue.
Love—gratitude—divide me—Once more, sultan,
Forgive me, pardon my mistaken zeal,
That left my country, cross'd the stormy seas,
To war with thee, brave prince, to war with honour.
Now that my passions give me leave to think;
The hand of Heaven appears in what I suffer'd,
My erring zeal has suffer'd by a zealot.

Selim. It does, O king. And, venerable Christian,
I know thy moderation will excuse me.
But since by ruling Wisdom (who unweigh'd,
Unmeant, does nought) men are so various-made,
So various turn'd, that in opinions they
Must blindly think, or take a different way;
In spite of force, since judgment will be free;
Then let us in this righteous mean agree:
Let holy rage, let persecution cease;
Let the head argue, but the heart be peace;
Let all mankind in love of what is right,
In virtue, and humanity, unite.

The End of the Fifth Act.



Tancred and Sigismunda.

A

T R A G E D Y.

N 5

TO HIS
ROYAL HIGHNESS
FREDERICK,
Prince of *Wales*.

SIR,

THE honour your ROYAL HIGH-
NESS has done me in the protec-
tion you was pleased to give to this tra-
gedy, emboldens me to lay it now at your
feet, and beg your permission to publish
it under your Royal patronage. The fa-
vouring and protecting of letters has been,
in all ages and countries, one distinguish-
ing mark of a great prince; and that with
good reason, not only as it shews a justness
of taste, and elevation of mind, but as the

DEDICATION.

influence of such a protection, by exciting good writers to labour with more emulation in the improvement of their several talents, not a little contributes to the embellishment and instruction of society. But of all the different species of writing, none has such an effect upon the lives and manners of men, as the dramatic ; and, therefore, that of all others most deserves the attention of princes ; who, by a judicious approbation of such pieces as tend to promote all public and private virtue, may, more than by any coercive methods, secure the purity of the stage, and in consequence thereof greatly advance the morals and politeness of their people. How eminently Your ROYAL HIGHNESS has always extended your favour and patronage to every art and science, and in a particular manner to dramatic performances, is too well known to the world for me to mention it here. Allow me only to wish, that what I have now the honour to offer to your
ROYAL

DEDICATION.

ROYAL HIGHNESS, may be judged not unworthy of your protection, at least in the *Sentiments* which it inculcates. A warm and grateful sense of your goodness to me, makes me desirous to seize every occasion of declaring in public, with what profound respect, and dutiful attachment, I am,

S I R,

Your ROYAL HIGHNESS'S

Most obliged,

most obedient, and

most devoted Servant,

JAMES THOMSON.

ADVERTISEMENT.

T H I S play is considerably shortened in the performance ; but I hope it will not be disagreeable to the Reader to see it as it was at first written ; there being a great difference betwixt a play in the closet, and upon the stage.

P R O L O G U E.

*B*OLD is the man ! who, in this nicer age,
Presumes to tread the chaste corrected stage.
Now, with gay tinsel arts we can no more
Conceal the want of Nature's sterling ore.
Our spells are vanish'd, broke our magic wand,
That us'd to waft you over sea and land.
Before your light the fairy people fade,
The demons fly—the ghost itself is laid.
In vain of martial scenes the loud alarms,
The mighty prompter thundering out to arms,
The playhouse posse clattering from afar,
The close-wedg'd battle, and the din of war.
Now, ev'n the senate seldom we convene;
The yawning fathers nod behind the scene.
Your taste rejects the glittering false sublime,
To sigh in metaphor, and die in rhyme.
High Rant is tumbled from his gallery throne:
Description, dreams—nay, similes are gone.

*What shall we then ? to please you how devise,
Whose judgment sits not in your ears and eyes?
Thrice happy ! could we catch great Shakspeare's art,
To trace the deep recesses of the heart ;
His simple plain sublime, to which is given
To strike the soul with darted flame from heaven :
Could we awake soft Otway's tender woe,
The pomp of verse and golden lines of Rowe.*

*We to your hearts apply : let them attend ;
Before their silent candid bar we bend.
If warm'd, they listen, 'tis our noblest praise ;
If cold, they wither all the Muse's bays.*

The
e

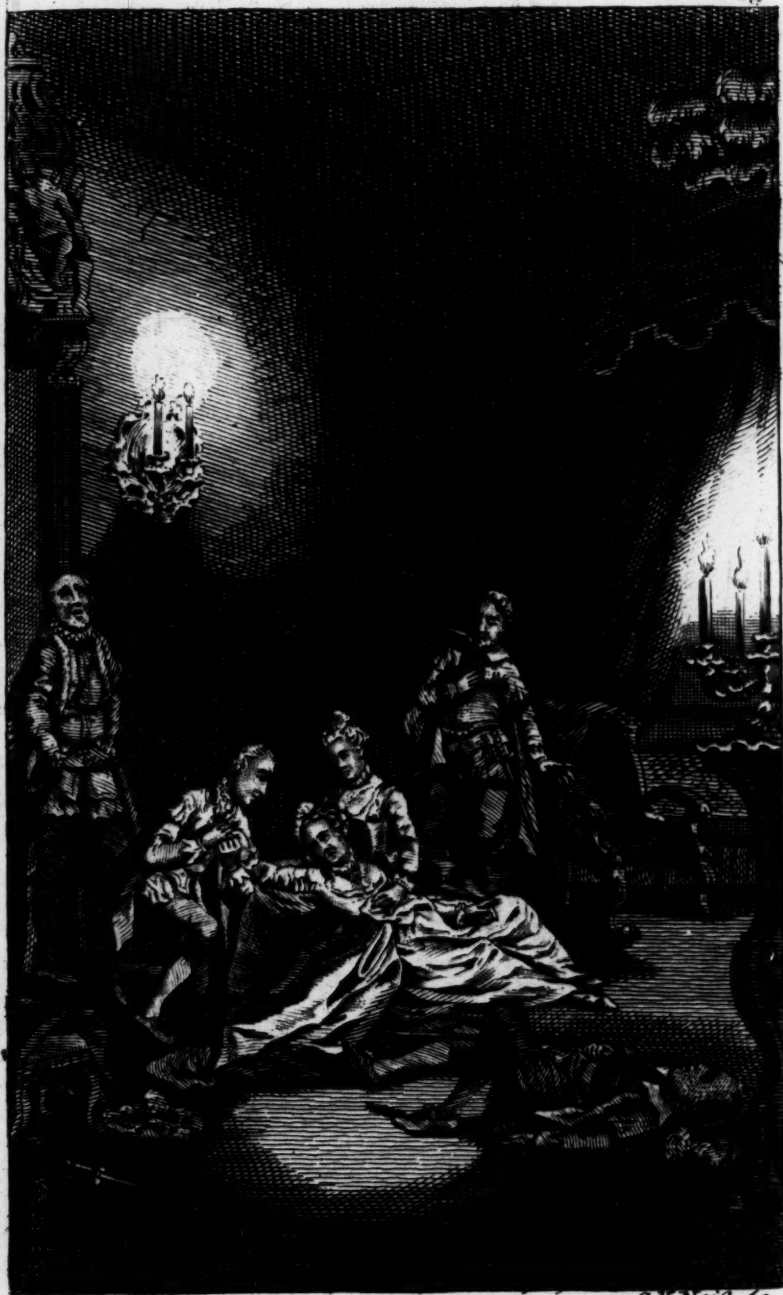
The Persons represented.

TANCRED, Count of <i>Leece</i> ,	Mr. <i>Garrick</i> .
MATTEO SIFFREDI, Lord High Chancellor of <i>Sicily</i> ,	} Mr. <i>Sheridan</i> .
EARL <i>Osmond</i> , Lord High Con- stable of <i>Sicily</i> ,	
RODOLPHO, Friend to <i>Tancred</i> , and Captain of the Guards,	} Mr. <i>Havard</i> .
SIGSIMUNDA, Daughter of <i>Siffredi</i> ,	
LAURA, Sister of <i>Rodolpho</i> ; and Friend to <i>Sigismunda</i> ,	} Miss <i>Budgel</i> .

Barons, Officers, Guards, &c.

SCENE, *The City of Palermo in Sicily.*





G. F. Neijt Sc.

Tancred *and* Sigismunda.

Tancred and Sigismunda.

A

TRAGEDY.

ACT I. SCENE I.

SIGISMUNDA, LAURA.

Sigif. **A**H, fatal day to *Sicily*! The king
Approaches his last moments?

Laura. So 'tis fear'd.

Sigif. The death of those distinguish'd by their
station,

But by their virtue more, awakes the mind
To solemn dread, and strikes a saddening awe:
Not that we grieve for them, but for ourselves,
Left to the toil of life—And yet the best
Are, by the playful children of this world,
At once forgot, as they had never been.

Laura, 'tis said—the heart is sometimes charged
With a prophetic sadness: Such, methinks,

Now

Now hangs on mine. The king's approaching death
Suggests a thousand fears. What troubles thence
May throw the state once more into confusion,
What sudden changes in my father's house
May rise, and part me from my dearest *Tancred*,
Alarms my thought.

Laura. The fears of love-sick fancy !
Perversely busy to torment itself.
But be assur'd, your father's steady friendship,
Join'd to a certain genius that commands,
Not kneels to fortune, will support and cherish,
Here in the public eye of *Sicily*,
This—I may call him—his adopted son,
The noble *Tancred*, form'd to all his virtues.

Sigis. Ah ; form'd to charm his daughter !—This
fair morn

Has tempted far the chace. Is he not yet
Return'd ?

Laura. No—When your father to the king,
Who now expiring lies, was call'd in haste,
He sent each way his messengers to find him ;
With such a look of ardour and importance,
As if this near event was to count *Tancred*
Of more importance than I comprehend.

Sigis. There lies, my *Laura*, o'er my *Tancred's*
birth

A cloud I cannot pierce. With princely accost,
Nay, with respect, which oft I have observ'd,
Stealing at times submissive o'er his features,
In *Belmont's* woods my father rear'd this youth—
Ah, woods† where first my artless bosom learnt
The sighs of love.—He gives him out the son
Of an old friend, a baron of *Apulia*,
Who in the late crusado bravely fell.

But

But then 'tis strange ; is all his family
 As well as father dead ? and all their friends,
 Except my fire, the generous good *Siffredi* ?
 Had he a mother, sister, brother left,
 The last remain of kindred ; with what pride,
 What rapture, might they fly o'er earth and sea,
 To claim this rising honour of their blood !
 This bright unknown ! this all-accomplish'd youth !
 Who charms—too much—the heart of *Sigismunda* !

Laura, perhaps your brother knows him better,
 The friend and partner of his freest hours.
 What says *Rodolpho* ? does he truly credit
 This story of his birth ?

Laura. He has sometimes,
 Like you, his doubts ; yet, when maturely weigh'd,
 Believes it true. As for lord *Tancred's* self,
 He never entertain'd the slightest thought
 That verg'd to doubt ; but oft laments his state,
 By cruel fortune so ill-pair'd to yours.

Sigis. Merit like his, the fortune of the mind,
 Beggars all wealth—Then, to your brother, *Laura*,
 He talks of me ?

Laura. Of nothing else. Howe'er
 The talk begin, it ends with *Sigismunda*.
 Their morning, noontide, and their evening walks
 Are full of you ; and all the woods of *Belmont*
 Inamour'd with your name——

Sigis. Away, my friend ;
 You flatter——yet the dear delusion charms.

Laura. No, *Sigismunda*, 'tis the strictest truth,
 Nor half the truth, I tell you. E'en with fondness
 My brother talks for ever of the passion.

That

That fires young *Tancred's* breast. So much it strikes
him,

He praises love as if he were a lover.

He blames the false pursuits of vagrant youth,

Calls them gay folly, a mistaken struggle

Against best-judging Nature. Heaven, he says,

In lavish bounty form'd the heart for love ;

In love included all the finer seeds

Of honour, virtue, friendship, purest bliss——

Sigis. Virtuous *Rodolpho*!

Laura. Then his pleasing theme

He varies to the praises of your lover——

Sigis. And what, my *Laura*, says he on the sub-
ject ?

Laura. He says that, tho' he were not nobly
born,

Nature has form'd him noble, generous, brave,

Truly magnanimous, and warmly scorning

Whatever bears the smallest taint of baseness :

That every easy virtue is his own,

Not learnt by painful labour, but inspir'd,

Implanted in his soul—Chiefly one charm

He in his graceful character observes ;

That tho' his passions burn with high impatience,

And sometimes, from a noble heat of nature,

Are ready to fly off ; yet the least check

Of ruling reason brings them back to temper,

And gentle softness.

Sigis. True ! O true, *Rodolpho* !

Blest be thy kindred worth for loving his !

He is all warmth, all amiable fire,

All quick heroic ardor ! temper'd soft

With gentleness of heart, and manly reason !

If Virtue were to wear a human form,
 To light it with her dignity and flame,
 Then soft'ning mix her smiles and tender graces;
 O she would chuse the person of my *Tancred*!
 Go on, my friend, go on, and ever praise him;
 The subject knows no bounds, nor can I tire,
 While my breast trembles to that sweeter music!
 The heart of woman tastes no truer joy,
 Is never flatter'd with such dear enchantment——
 'Tis more than selfish vanity—as when
 She hears the praises of the man she loves——
Laura. Madam, your father comes.

S C E N E II.

SIFFREDI, SIGISMUNDA, LAURA.

Siff. (To an attendaut as he enters.
 Lord *Tancred* then

Is found?

Attend. My lord, he quickly will be here.

I scarce could keep before him, tho' he bid me
 Speed on, to say he would attend your orders.

Siff. 'Tis well—retire—You, too, my daughter,
 leave me.

Sigis. I go, my father—But how fares the king?

Siff. He is no more. Gone to that awful state,
 Where kings the crown wear only of their virtues.

Sigis. How bright must then be his!—This stroke
 is sudden.

He

He was this morning well, when to the chace
Lord *Tancred* went.

Siff. 'Tis true. But at his years
Death gives short notice—Drooping nature then,
Without a gust of pain to shake it, falls.
His death, my daughter, was that happy period
Which few attain. The duties of his day
Were all discharg'd, and gratefully enjoy'd
Its noblest blessings; calm as evening skies,
Was his pure mind, and lighted up with hopes
That open heaven; when for his last long sleep
Timely prepar'd, a lassitude of life,
A pleasing weariness of mortal joy,
Fell on his soul, and down he sunk to rest.
O may my death be such!—He but one wish
Left unfulfill'd, which was to see count *Tancred*—

Sigis. To see count *Tancred*!—Pardon me, my
lord—

Siff. For what, my daughter?—But, with such
emotion,

Why did you start at mention of count *Tancred*?

Sigis. Nothing—I only hop'd the dying king
Might mean to make some generous just provision
For this your worthy charge, this noble orphan.

Siff. And he has done it largely—Leave me
now—

I want some private conference with lord *Tancred*.

S C E N E III.

SIFFREDI alone,

My doubts are but too true—If these old eyes
Can trace the marks of love, a mutual passion

Has

Has seiz'd, I fear, my daughter and this prince,
 My sovereign now—Should it be so? Ah there,
 There lurks a brooding tempest, that may shake
 My long-concerted scheme, to settle firm
 The public peace and welfare, which the king
 Has made the prudent basis of his will—
 Away! unworthy views! you shall not tempt me!
 Nor interest, nor ambition, shall seduce
 My fixt resolve—perish the selfish thought,
 Which our own good prefers to that of millions!—
 He comes—my king—unconscious of his fortune.

SCENE IV.

TANCRED, SIFFREDI.

Tancred. My lord *Siffredi*, in your looks I read,
 Confirm'd, the mournful news that fly abroad
 From tongue to tongue—We then, at last, have lost
 The good old king?

Siff. Yes, we have lost a father!
 The greatest blessing Heaven bestows on mortals,
 And seldom found amidst these wilds of time.
 A good, a worthy king!—Hear me, my *Tancred*,
 And I will tell thee, in a few plain words,
 How he deserv'd that best, that glorious title.
 'Tis nought complex, 'tis clear as truth and virtue.
 He lov'd his people, deem'd them all his children;
 The good exalted, and depress'd the bad.
 He spurn'd the flattering crew, with scorn rejected
 Their smooth advice that only means themselves,
 Their

Their schemes to aggrandize him into baseness :
 Nor did he less disdain the secret breath,
 The whisper'd tale, that blights a virtuous name.
 He fought alone the good of those for whom
 He was entrusted with the sovereign power :
 Well knowing that a people in their rights ,
 And industry protected ; living safe
 Beneath the sacred shelter of the laws,
 Encourag'd in their genius, arts, and labours,
 And happy each as he himself deserves ;
 Are ne'er ungrateful. With unsparing hand
 They will for him provide ; their filial love
 And confidence are his unfailing treasure,
 And every honest man his faithful guard.

Tancred. A general face of grief o'erspreads the
 city.

I mark'd the people, as I hither came,
 In crowds assembled, struck with silent sorrow,
 And pouring forth the noblest praise of tears.
 Those, whom remembrance of their former woes,
 And long experience of the vain illusions
 Of youthful hope, had into wise consent
 And fear of change corrected, wrung their hands,
 And often casting up their eyes to heaven,
 Gave sign of sad conjecture. Others shew'd,
 Athwart their grief, or real or affected,
 A gleam of expectation, from what chance
 And change might bring. A mingled murmur ran
 Along the streets ; and, from the lonely court
 Of him who can no more assist their fortunes,
 I saw the courtier-fry, with eager haste,
 All hurrying to *Constantia*.

Siff. Noble youth !

I joy

From
Vol

I joy to hear from thee these just reflections,

Worthy of riper years—But if they seek

Constantia, trust me, they mistake their course.

Tancred. How! is she not, my lord, the late
king's sister,

Heir to the crown of *Sicily*? the last

Of our fam'd *Norman* line, and now our queen?

Siff. *Tancred*, 'tis true; she is the late king's
sister,

The sole surviving offspring of that tyrant

William the Bad—so for his vices ityl'd;

Who spilt such noble blood, and sore oppress'd

Th' exhausted land: whence grievous wars arose,

And many a dire convulsion shook the state.

When he, whose death *Sicilia* mourns to-day,

William, who has, and well deserv'd the name

Of *Good*, succeeding to his father's throne,

Reliev'd his country's woes—But to return—

She is the late king's sister, born some months

After the tyrant's death, but not next heir.

Tancred. You much surprize me—May I then
presume

To ask who is?

Siff. Come nearer, noble *Tancred*,

Son of my care! I must, on this occasion,

Consult thy generous heart; which, when conducted

By rectitude of mind and honest virtues,

Gives better counsel than the hoary head—

Then know, there lives a prince, here in *Palermo*,

The lineal offspring of our famous hero,

Roger the First,

Tancred. Great Heaven!—How far remov'd

From that our mighty founder?

Siff. His great grandson :
Sprung from his eldest son, who died untimely,
Before his father.

Tancred. Ha ! the prince you mean,
Is he not *Manfred's* son ? The generous, brave,
Unhappy *Manfred* ! whom the tyrant *William*,
You just now mention'd, not content to spoil
Of his paternal crown, threw into fetters,
And infamously murder'd ?

Siff. Yes—the same

Tancred. By Heavens ! I joy to find our *Norman*
reign,
The world's sole light amidst these barbarous ages !
Yet rears its head ; and shall not, from the lance,
Pass to the feeble distaff—But this prince
Where has he lain conceal'd ?

Siff. The late good king,
By noble pity mov'd, contriv'd to save him
From his dire father's unrelenting rage,
And had him rear'd in private, as became
His birth and hopes, with high and princely nurture.
Till now, too young to rule a troubled state,
By civil broils most miserably torn,
He in his safe retreat has lain conceal'd,
His birth and fortune to himself unknown ;
But when the dying king to me entrusted,
As to the chancellor of the realm, his will,
His successor he nam'd him.

Tancred. Happy youth !
He then will triumph o'er his father's foes,
O'er haughty *Osmond*, and the tyrant's daughters.

Siff. Ay, that is what I dread—that heat of
youth ;

There

There lurks, I fear, perdition to the state,
 I dread the horrors of rekindled war :
 Tho' dead, the tyrant still is to be fear'd ;
 His daughter's party still is strong, and numerous :
 Her friend, earl *Osmond*, constable of *Sicily*,
 Experienc'd, brave, high-born, of mighty interest.
 Better the prince and princess should by marriage
 Unite their friends, their interest, and their claims ;
 Then will the peace and welfare of the land
 On a firm basis rise.

Tancred. My lord *Siffredi*,
 If by myself I of this prince may judge,
 That scheme will scarce succeed—Your prudent age
 In vain will counsel, if the heart forbid it—
 But wherefore fear ? The right is clearly his ;
 And, under your direction, with each man
 Of worth, and steadfast loyalty, to back
 At once the king's appointment and his birth-right,
 There is no ground for fear. They have great odds,
 Against th' astonish'd sons of violence,
 Who fight with awful justice on their side,
 All *Sicily* will rouse, all faithful hearts
 Will range themselves around prince *Manfred's* son.
 For me, I here devote me to the service
 Of this young prince ; I every drop of blood
 Will lose with joy, with transport in his cause—
 Pardon my warmth—but that, my lord, will never
 To this decision come—Then find the prince ;
 Lose not a moment to awaken in him
 The royal soul. Perhaps he now desponding
 Pines in a corner, and laments his fortune ;
 That in the narrower bounds of private life
 He must confine his aims, those swelling virtues
 Which from his noble father he inherits.

Siff. Perhaps, regardless, in the common bane
Of youth he melts, in vanity and love.
But if the seeds of virtue glow within him,
I will awake a higher sense, a love
That grasps the loves and happiness of millions.

Tancred. Why that surmise? Or should he love,
Siffredi,

I doubt not, it is nobly, which will raise
And animate his virtues—O permit me
To plead the cause of youth—Their virtue oft,
In pleasure's soft enchantment lull'd a while,
Forgets itself; it sleeps and gayly dreams,
Till great occasion rouse it: then all flame,
It walks abroad, with heighten'd soul and vigour,
And by the change astonishes the world.
Ev'n with a kind of sympathy, I feel
The joy that waits this prince; when all the powers,
Th' expanding heart can wish, of doing good,
Whatever swells ambition, or exalts
The human soul into divine emotions,
All crowd at once upon him.

Siff. Ah, my *Tancred,*

Nothing so easy as in speculation,
And at a distance seen, the course of honour,
A fair delightful champain strew'd with flowers.
But when the practice comes; when our fond passions,
Pleasure, and pride, and self-indulgence, throw
Their magic dust around, the prospect roughens:
Then dreadful passes, craggy mountains rise,
Cliffs to be scal'd, and torrents to be stemm'd:
Then toil ensues, and perseverance stern;
And endless combats with our grosser sense,
Oft lost, and oft renew'd; and generous pain
For others felt; and, harder lesson still!

Our

Our honest bliss for others sacrific'd;
 And all the rugged task of virtue quails
 The stoutest heart of common resolution.
 Few get above this turbid scene of strife.
 Few gain the summit, breathe that purest air,
 That heavenly ether, which untroubled sees
 The storm of vice and passion rage below.

Tancred. Most true, my lord. But why thus aug-
 ure ill?

You seem to doubt this prince. I know him not.
 Yet oh, methinks, my heart could answer for him!
 The juncture is so high, so strong the gale
 That blows from heaven, as thro' the deadeft soul
 Might breathe the godlike energy of virtue.

Siff. Hear him, immortal shades of his great fa-
 thers!—

Forgive me, Sir, this trial of your heart:
 Thou! Thou art he!

Tancred. Siffredi!

Siff. Tancred, thou!

Thou art the man, of all the many thousands
 That toil upon the bosom of this isle
 By Heaven elected to command the rest,
 To rule, protect them, and to make them happy!

Tancred. *Manfred* my father! I the last support
 Of the fam'd *Norman* line, that awes the world!
 I! who this morning wander'd forth an orphan,
 Outcast of all but thee, my second father!
 Thus call'd to glory! to the first great lot
 Of human kind!—O wonder-working Hand
 That, in majestic silence, sways ar will
 The mighty movements of unbounded nature;
 O grant me, Heaven! the virtues to sustain
 This awful burden of so many heroes!

Let me not be exalted into shame,
Set up the worthless pageant of vain grandeur.

Meantime I thank the justice of the king,
Who has my right bequeath'd me. Thee, *Siffredi*,
I thank thee—Oh, I ne'er enough can thank thee!
Yes, thou hast been—thou art—shalt be my father!
Thou shalt direct my unexperienc'd years,
Shalt be the ruling head, and I the hand.

Siff. It is enough for me—to see my sovereign
Assert his virtues, and maintain his honour.

Tancred. I think, my lord, you said the king com-
mitted

To you his will. I hope it is not clogg'd
With any base conditions, any clause,
To tyrannize my heart, and to *Constantia*
Enslave my hand devoted to another.
The hint you just now gave of that alliance,
You must imagine, wakes my fear. But know,
In this alone I will not bear dispute,
Not ev'n from thee, *Siffredi*!—Let the council
Be strait assembled, and the will there open'd:
Thence issue speedy orders to convene,
This day ere noon, the senate: where those barons,
Who now are in *Palermo*, will attend,
To pay their ready homage to the king,
Their rightful king, who claims his native crown,
And will not be a king by deeds and parchments.

Siff. I go, my liege. But once again permit me
To tell you—Now, now, is the trying crisis,
That must determine of your future reign.
Oh, with heroic rigour watch your heart!
And to the sovereign duties of the king,
Th' unequal'd pleasures of a God on earth,
Submit the common joys, the common passions,

Nay,

Nay, ev'n the virtues of the private man.

Tancred. Of that no more. They not oppose, but
aid,

Invigorate, cherish, and reward each other.

The kind all-ruling Wisdom is no tyrant.

SCENE V.

TANCRED *alone.*

Now, generous *Sigismunda*, comes my turn
To shew my love was not of thine unworthy,
When fortune bade me blush to look to thee;
But what is fortune to the wish of love?
A miserable bankrupt! O 'tis poor,
'Tis scanty all, whate'er we can bestow!
The wealth of kings is wretchedness and want!—
Quick, let me find her! taste that highest joy,
Th' exalted heart can know, the mixt effusion
Of gratitude and love!—Behold, she comes!

SCENE VI.

TANCRED, SIGISMUNDA.

Tancred. My fluttering soul was all on wing to
find thee,
My love! my *Sigismunda*!

Sigif. O my *Tancred*!

Tell me, what means this mystery and gloom
That lows around? Just now, involv'd in thought,
My father shot athwart me—You, my lord,

Seem strangely mov'd—I fear some dark event
 From the king's death to trouble our repose,
 'That tender calm we in the woods of *Belmont*
 So happily enjoy'd—Explain this hurry ;
 What means it? Say.

Tancred. It means that we are happy !
 Beyond our most romantic wishes happy !

Sigif. You but perplex me more.

Tancred. It means, my fairest !
 That thou art queen of *Sicily* ; and I
 The happiest of mankind ! than monarch more !
 Because with thee I can adorn my throne.
Manfred, who fell by tyrant *William's* rage,
 Fam'd *Roger's* lineal issue, was my father. [*Pausing.*
 You droop, my love ; dejected on a sudden ;
 You seem to mourn my fortune—The soft tear
 Springs in thy eye—O let me kiss it off——
 Why this, my *Sigismunda*?

Sigif. Royal *Tancred*,
 None at your glorious fortune can like me
 Rejoice ;—yet me alone, of all *Sicilians*,
 It makes unhappy.

Tancred. I should hate it then !
 Should throw, with scorn, the splendid ruin from me !—
 No, *Sigismunda*, 'tis my hope with thee
 To share it, whence it draws its richest value.

Sigif. You are my sovereign—I at humble distance—

Tancred. Thou art my queen ! the sovereign of my
 soul !

You never reign'd with such triumphant lustre,
 Such winning charms as now ; yet, thou art still
 The dear, the tender, generous *Sigismunda* !
 Who, with a heart exalted far above
 Those selfish views that charm the common breast,
 Stoop'd

Stoop'd from the height of life and courted beauty,
 Then, then, to love me, when I seem'd of fortune
 The hopeless outcast, when I had no friend,
 None to protect and own me but thy father.
 And would'st thou claim all goodness to thyself?
 Canst thou thy *Tancred* deem so dully form'd,
 Of such gross clay, just as I reach the point—
 A point my wildest hopes could never image—
 In that great moment, full of every virtue,
 That I should then so mean a traitor prove
 To the best bliss and honour of mankind,
 So much disgrace the human heart, as then,
 For the dead form of flattery and pomp,
 The faithless joys of courts, to quit kind truth,
 The cordial sweets of friendship and of love,
 The life of life! my all, my *Sigismunda*!
 I could upbraid thy fears, call them unkind,
 Cruel, unjust, an outrage to my heart,
 Did they not spring from love.

Sigis. Think not, my lord,
 That to such vulgar doubts I can descend.
 Your heart, I know, disdains the little thought
 Of changing with the vain external change
 Of circumstance and fortune. Rather thence
 It would, with rising ardour, greatly feel
 A noble pride to shew itself the same.
 But, ah! the hearts of kings are not their own.
 There is a haughty duty that subjects them
 To chains of state, to wed the public welfare,
 And not indulge the tender private virtues.
 Some high-descended princefs, who will bring
 New power and interest to your throne, demands
 Your royal hand—perhaps *Constantia*—

Tancred. She!

O 5

O name

O name her not! Were I this moment free,
 And disengag'd as he who never felt
 The powerful eye of beauty, never sigh'd
 For matchless worth like thine, I should abhor
 All thoughts of that alliance. Her fell father
 Most basely murder'd mine; and she, his daughter,
 Supported by his barbarous party still,
 His pride inherits, his imperious spirit,
 And insolent pretensions to my throne.
 And canst thou deem me then so poorly tame,
 So cool a traitor to my father's blood,
 As from the prudent cowardice of state
 E'er to submit to such a base proposal?
 Detested thought! O doubly, doubly hateful!
 From the two strongest passions; from aversion
 To this *Constantia*—and from love to thee.

Custom, 'tis true, a venerable tyrant,
 O'er servile man extends her blind dominion:
 The pride of kings enslaves them; their ambition,
 Or interest, lords it o'er the better passions.
 But vain their talk, mask'd under specious words
 Of station, duty, and of public good:
 They whom just Heaven has to a throne exalted,
 To guard the rights and liberties of others,
 What duty binds them to betray their own?
 For me, my free-born heart shall bear no dictates,
 But those of truth and honour; wear no chains,
 But the dear chains of Love and *Sigismunda*!
 Or if indeed my choice must be directed
 By views of public good, whom shall I chuse
 So fit to grace, to dignify a crown,
 And beam sweet mercy on a happy people,
 As thee, my love? whom place upon my throne
 But thee, descended from the good *Siffredi*!

'Tis fit that heart be thine, which drew from him
Whate'er can make it worthy thy acceptance.

Sigif. Cease, cease, to raise my hopes above my
duty,

Charm me no more, my *Tancred!*—Oh, that we
In those blest woods, where first you won my soul,
Had pass'd our gentle days: far from the toil
And pomp of courts! Such is the wish of love;
Of love, that, with delightful weakness, knows
No bliss and no ambition but itself.
But, in the world's full light, those charming dreams,
Those fond illusions vanish. Awful duties,
The tyranny of men, ev'n your own heart,
Where lurks a sense your passion stifles now,
And proud imperious honour, call you from me.
'Tis all in vain—You cannot hush a voice
That murmurs here—I must not be persuaded!

Tancred. [*kneeling.*] Hear me, thou soul of all my
hopes and wishes!

And witness, Heaven! prime source of love and joy!
Not a whole warring world combin'd against me;
Its pride, its splendor, its imposing forms,
Nor interest, nor ambition, nor the farce
Of solemn state, not ev'n thy father's wisdom;
Shall ever shake my faith to *Sigismunda!*

[*Trumpets, and acclamations heard.*]

But, hark! the public voice to duties call me,
Which with unweary'd zeal I will discharge;
And thou, yes thou, shalt be my bright reward—
Yet—ere I go—to hush thy lovely fears,
Thy delicate objections—— [*writes his name.*]

Take this blank,
Sign'd with my name, and give it to thy father:
Tell him 'tis my command, it be fill'd up

300 T A N C R E D *and*

With a most strict and solemn marriage-contract.
How dear each tie! how charming to my soul!
That more unites me to my *Sigismunda*.

For thee and for my people's good to live,
Is all the bliss which sovereign power can give.

The End of the First Act.

A C T II. S C E N E I.

SIFFREDI *alone*.

SO far 'tis well—The late king's will proceeds
Upon the plan I counsel'd; that prince *Tancred*
Shall make *Constantia* partner of his throne.
O great, O wish'd event! whence the dire seeds
Of dark intestine broils, of civil war,
And all its dreadful miseries and crimes,
Shall be for ever rooted from the land.
May these dim eyes, long blasted by the rage
Of cruel faction and my country's woes,
Tir'd with the toils and vanities of life,
Behold this period, then be clos'd in peace!

But how this mighty obstacle surmount,
Which love has thrown betwixt? Love, that disturbs
The schemes of wisdom still; that, wing'd with passion,
Blind and impetuous in its fond pursuits,
Leaves the grey-headed reason far behind.
Alas! how frail the state of human bliss,
When ev'n our honest passions o't destroy it!
I was to blame, in solitude and shades,

Infectious

Infectious scenes! to trust their youthful hearts.
 Would I had mark'd the rising flame, that now
 Burns out with dangerous force!—My daughter owns
 Her passion for the king; she trembling own'd it,
 With prayers and tears and tender supplications,
 That almost shook my firmness—And this blank,
 Which his rash fondness gave her, shews how much,
 To what a wild extravagance he loves—
 I see no means—it soils my deepest thought—
 How to controul this madness of the king,
 That wears the face of virtue, and will thence
 Disdain restraint, will from his generous heart
 Borrow new rage, ev'n speciously oppose
 To reason reason—But it must be done.
 My own advice, of which I more and more
 Approve, the strict conditions of the will,
 Highly demand his marriage with *Constantia*;
 Or else her party has a far pretence—
 And all, at once, is horror and confusion—
 How issue from this maze?—The crowding barons,
 Here summon'd to the palace, meet already,
 To pay their homage, and confirm the will.
 On a few moments hangs the public fate,
 On a few hasty moments—Ha! there shone
 A gleam of hope—Yes—with this very paper
 I yet will save him—Necessary means
 For good and noble ends can ne'er be wrong.
 In that resistless, that peculiar ease,
 Deceit is truth and virtue—But how hold
 This lion in the toil?—O I will form it
 Of such a fatal thread, twist it so strong
 With all the ties of honour and of duty,
 That his most desperate fury shall not break
 The honest snare—Here is the royal hand—

I will

I will beneath it write a perfect, full,
 And absolute agreement to the will;
 Which read before the nobles of the realm
 Assembled, in the sacred face of *Sicily*,
Constantia present, every heart and eye
 Fix'd on their monarch, every tongue applauding,
 He must submit, his dream of love must vanish—
 It shall be done!——To me, I know, 'tis ruin;
 But safety to the public, to the king.
 I will not reason more, I will not listen
 Ev'n to the voice of honour—No—'tis fix'd!
 I here devote me for my prince and country;
 Let them be safe, and let me nobly perish!
 Behold earl *Osmond* comes; without whose aid
 My schemes are all in vain.

SCENE II.

OSMOND, SIFFREDI.

Osmond. My lord *Siffredi*,

I from the council hasten'd to *Constantia*,
 And have accomplish'd what we there propos'd.
 The princess to the will submits her claims.
 She with her presence means to grace the senate,
 And of your royal charge young *Tancred's* hand
 Accept. At first indeed, it shock'd her hopes
 Of reigning sole, this new surprizing scene
 Of *Manfred's* son, appointed by the king
 With her joint heir——But I so fully shew'd
 The justice of the case, the public good
 And sure establish'd peace which thence would rise,
 Join'd

Join'd to the strong necessity that urg'd her,
If on *Sicilia's* throne she meant to sit,
As to the wise disposal of the will
Her high ambition tam'd. Methought, besides,
I could discern that not from prudence merely
She to this choice submitted.

Siff. Noble Osmond,

You have in this done to the public great
And signal service. Yes, I must avow it;
This frank and ready instance of your zeal,
In such a trying crisis of the state,
When interest and ambition might have warp'd
Your views; I own, this truly generous virtue
Upbraids the rashness of my former judgment.

Osmond. Siffredi, no—To you belongs the praise;
The glorious work is yours. Had I not seiz'd,
Improv'd the wish'd occasion to root out
Division from the land, and save my country,
I had been base, been infamous for ever.
'Tis you, my lord, to whom the many thousands,
That by the barbarous sword of civil war
Had fall'n inglorious, owe their lives; to you
The sons of this fair isle, from her first peers
Down to the swain who tills her golden plains,
Owe their safe homes, their soft domestic hours,
And thro' late time posterity shall bless you,
You who advis'd this will—I blush to think,
I have so long oppos'd the best good man
In *Sicily*—With what impartial care
Ought we to watch o'er prejudice and passion,
Nor trust too much the jaundic'd eye of party!
Henceforth its vain delusions I renounce,
Its hot determinations, that confine
All merit and all virtue to itself.

Te

To yours I join my hand; with you will own
 No interest and no party but my country.
 Nor is your friendship only my ambition;
 There is a dearer name, the name of father,
 By which I should rejoice to call *Siffredi*.
 Your daughter's hand would to the public weal
 Unite my private happiness.

Siff. My lord,
 You have my glad consent. To be allied
 To your distinguish'd family, and merit,
 I shall esteem an honour. From my soul,
 I here embrace earl *Osmond* as my friend,
 And son.

Os. You make him happy. This assent,
 So frank and warm, to what I long have wish'd,
 Engages all my gratitude; at once,
 In the first blossom, it matures our friendship.
 I from this moment vow myself the friend,
 And zealous servant of *Siffredi's* house.

Enter an Officer belonging to the Court.

OFFICER to *Siffredi*.

The king, my lord, demands your speedy presence.

Siff. I will attend him strait—Farewell, my lord:
 The senate meets: there, a few moments hence,
 I will rejoin you.

Os. There, my noble lord,
 We will complete this salutary work,
 Will there begin a new auspicious era.

S C E N E III.

OSMOND *alone.*

Siffredi gives his daughter to my wishes—
 But does she give herself? Gay, young, and flatter'd,
 Perhaps

Perhaps engag'd, will she her youthful heart
 Yield to my harsher, uncomplying years?
 I am not form'd, by flattery and praise,
 By sighs and tears, and all the whining trade
 Of love, to feed a fair-one's vanity;
 To charm at once and spoil her. These soft arts
 Nor suit my years nor temper; these be left
 To boys and doating age. A prudent father,
 By nature charg'd to guide and rule her choice,
 Relinquish his daughter to a husband's power,
 Who with superior dignity, with reason,
 And manly tenderness, will ever love her;
 Not first a kneeling slave, and then a tyrant.

SCENE IV.

OSMOND, BARONS.

Osmond. My lords, I greet you well. This wondrous day
 Unites us all in amity and friendship.
 We meet to-day with open hearts and looks,
 Not gloom'd by party, scouling on each other,
 But all the children of one happy isle,
 The social sons of liberty. No pride,
 No passion now, no thwarting views divide us:
 Prince *Manfred's* line, at last, to *William's* join'd,
 Combines us in one family of brothers.
 This to the late good king's well-order'd will,
 And wife *Siffredi's* generous care we owe.
 I truly give you joy. First of you all,
 I here renounce those errors and divisions
 That have so long disturb'd our peace, and seem'd,
 Fermenting still, to threaten new commotions—

By

By time instructed let us not disdain
To quit mistakes. We all, my lords, have err'd.
Men may, I find, be honest, tho' they differ.

1st Baron. Who follows not, my lord, the fair ex-
ample

You set us all, whate'er be his pretence,
Loves not with single and unbiass'd heart
His country as he ought.

2d Baron. O beauteous Peace!

Sweet union of a state; what else, but thou,
Gives safety, strength, and glory to a people!
I bow, lord constable, beneath the snow
Of many years; yet in my breast revives
A youthful flame. Methinks, I see again
Those gentle days renew'd, that bless'd our isle,
Ere by this wasteful fury of division,
Worse than our *Ætna's* most destructive fires,
It desolated sunk. I see our plains
Unbounded waving with the gifts of harvest;
Our seas with commerce throng'd, our busy ports
With chearful toil. Our *Enna* blooms afresh;
Afresh the sweets of thymy *Hybla* flow.
Our nymphs and shepherds, sporting in each vale,
Inspire new song, and wake the pastoral reed—
The tongue of age is fond—Come, come, my sons;
I long to see this prince, of whom the world
Speaks largely well—His father was my friend,
The brave unhappy *Manfred*—Come, my lords;
We tarry here too long.

S C E N E

SCENE V.

TWO OFFICERS, *keeping off the Crowd.*

One of the Crowd. Shew us our king.

The valiant *Manfred's* son, who lov'd the people—
We must, we will behold him—Give us way.

1st Officer. Pray, gentlemen, give back—it must
not be—

Give back, I pray—on such a glad occasion
I would not ill entreat the lowest of you.

2d Man of the Crowd. Nay, give us but a glimpse
of our young king,
We more than any baron of them all
Will pay him true allegiance.

2d Officer. Friends—indeed—
You cannot pass this way—We have strict orders,
To keep for him himself, and for the barons,
All these apartments clear—Go to the gate
That fronts the sea—You there will find admission.

All. Long live king *Tancred!* *Manfred's* son—
Huzza! [*Crowd goes off.*]

1st Officer. I do not marvel at their rage of joy:
He is a brave and amiable prince.
When in my lord *Seffredi's* house I liv'd,
Ere by his favour I obtain'd this office,
I there remember well the young count *Tancred.*
To see him and to love him were the same.
He was so noble in his ways, yet still
So affable and mild—Well, well, old Sicily,
Yet happy days await thee!

2d Officer. Grant it, Heaven!
We have seen sad and troublous times enough.

He

He is, they say, to wed the late king's sister,
Constantia.

1st Officer. Friend, of that I greatly doubt.
Or I mistake, or lord *Siffredi's* daughter,
The gentle *Stigismunda* has his heart.
If one may judge by kindly cordial looks,
And fond assiduous care to please each other,
Most certainly they love——O be they blest,
As they deserve! It were great pity aught
Should part a matchless pair: the glory he,
And she the blooming grace of *Sicily*!
2d Officer. My lord *Rodolpho* comes.

S C E N E IV.

RODOLPHO, *from the Senate*.

Rod. My honest friends,
You may retire. [Officers go out.]

A storm is in the wind.
This Will perplexes all. No, *Tancred* never
Can stoop to these conditions, which at once
Attack his rights, his honour, and his love.
Those wise old men, those plodding grave state pe-
dants,

Forget the course of youth; their crooked prudence,
To baseness verging still, forgets to take
Into their fine-spun schemes the generous heart,
That thro' the cobweb system bursting lays
Their labours waste—So will this business prove,
Or I mistake the king—back from the pomp

He

He seem'd at first to shrink ; and round his brow
 I mark'd a gathering cloud, when by his side,
 As if design'd to share the public homage,
 He saw the tyrant's daughter. But confess'd,
 At least to me, the doubling tempest frown'd,
 And shook his swelling bosom, when he heard
 Th' unjust, the base conditions of the will.
 Uncertain, tost in cruel agitation,
 He oft, methought, address'd himself to speak
 And interrupt *Siffredi* ; who appear'd,
 With conscious haste, to dread that interruption,
 And hurry'd on—But hark ! I hear a noise,
 As if th' assembly rose—Ha ! *Sigismunda*,
 Oppress'd with grief and wrapt in pensive sorrow,
 Passes along——

[*Sigismunda and Attendants pass thro' the
 back Scene. Laura advances.*]

S C E N E VII.

RODOLPHOS, LAURA.

Laura. Your high-prais'd friend, the king,
 Is false, most vilely false ! The meanest slave
 Had shown a nobler heart ; nor grossly thus,
 By the first bait ambition spread, been gull'd.
 He *Manfred's* son ! away ! it cannot be !
 The son of that brave prince could ne'er betray
 Those rights so long usurp'd from his great fathers,
 Which he this day, by such amazing fortune,
 Had just regain'd ; he ne'er could sacrifice

All

All faith, all honour, gratitude, and love,
 Ev'n just resentment of his father's fate,
 And pride itself; whate'er exalts a man
 Above the groveling sons of peasant-mud,
 All in a moment—And for what? why truly,
 For kind permission, gracious leave, to sit
 On his own throne with tyrant *William's* daughter!

Rod. I stand amaz'd—You surely wrong him,
Laura.

There must be some mistake.

Laura. There can be none!

Siffredi read his full and free consent
 Before th'applauding senate. True, indeed,
 A small remain of shame, a timorous weakness,
 Ev'n dastardly in falsehood made him blush
 To act this scene in *Sigismunda's* eye,
 Who sunk beneath his perfidy and baseness.
 Hence, till to-morrow he adjourn'd the senate—
 To-morrow fix'd with infamy to crown him!
 Then, leading off his gay triumphant princess,
 He left the poor unhappy *Sigismunda*,
 To bend her trembling steps to that sad home
 His faithless vows will render hateful to her—
 He comes—Farewell—I cannot bear his presence!

SCENE VIII.

TANCRED, SIFFREDI, RODOLPHO.

Tancred. (*entering to Siffredi.*) Avoid me, hoary
 traitor!—Go, *Rodolpho*,
 Give orders that all passages this way

Be

Be shut—Defend me from a hateful world,
The bane of peace and honour—then return—
What! dost thou haunt me still? O monstrous
insult!

Unparallel'd indignity! Just Heaven!
Was ever king, was ever man so treated?
So trampled into baseness!

Siff. Here, my liege,
Here strike! I nor deserve, nor ask for mercy.

Tancred. Distraction!—Oh, my soul!—Hold, rea-
son, hold
Thy giddy feat—Oh, this inhuman outrage
Unhinges thought!

Siff. Exterminate thy servant!
Tancred. All, all but this I could have borne—
but this!

This daring insolence beyond example!
This murd'rous stroke that stabs my peace for ever!
That wounds me there—there! where the human heart
Most exquisitely feels——

Siff. Oh, bear it not,
My royal lord! appease on me your vengeance!

Tancred. Did ever tyrant image aught so cruel!
The lowest slave that crawls upon the earth,
Robb'd of each comfort Heaven bestows on mortals,
On the bare ground, has still his virtue left,
The sacred treasures of an honest heart,
Which thou hast dar'd, with rash audacious hand,
And impious fraud, in me to violate——

Siff. Behold, my liege, that rash audacious hand.
Which not repents its crime—O glorious! happy!
If by my ruin I can save your honour.

Tancred. Such honour I renounce! with sovereign
scorn

Greatly

Greatly detest it, and its mean adviser !
 Hast thou not dar'd beneath my name to shelter—
 My name for other purposes design'd,
 Given from the fondness of a faithful heart,
 With the best love o'erflowing—hast thou not
 Beneath thy sovereign's name basely presum'd
 To shield a lye ? a lye ! in public utter'd,
 To all deluded *Sicily* ? But know,
 This poor contrivance is as weak as base.
 In such a wretched toil none can be held
 But fools and cowards—Soon thy flimsy arts,
 Touch'd by my just, my burning indignation,
 Shall burst like threads in flame !—Thy doating
 prudence

But more secures the purpose it would shake.
 Had my resolves been wavering and doubtful,
 This would confirm them, make them fix'd as fate ;
 This adds the only motive that was wanting
 To urge them on thro' war and desolation—
 What ! marry her ? *Constantia* ! Her ! the daughter
 Of the fell tyrant who destroy'd my father !
 The very thought is madness ! Ere thou seest
 The torch of *Hymen* light these hated nuptials,
 Thou shalt behold *Sicilia* wrapt-in flames,
 Her cities raz'd, her valleys drench'd with slaughter—
 Love set aside—my pride assumes the quarrel.
 My honour now is up ; in spite of thee,
 A world combin'd against me, I will give
 This scatter'd Will in fragments to the winds,
 Assert my rights, the freedom of my heart,
 Crush all who dare oppose me to the dust,
 And heap perdition on thee !

Siff. Sir, 'tis just.

Exhaust

Exhaust on me your rage ; I claim it all.
But for these public threats thy passion utters,
'Tis what thou canst not do !

Tancred. I cannot ! ha !

Driven to the dreadful brink of such dishonour
Enough to make the tamest coward brave,
And into fierceness rouse the mildest nature,
What shall arrest my vengeance ? who !

Siff. Thyself !

Tancred. Away ! dare not to justify thy crime !
That, that alone can aggravate its horror,
Add insolence to insolence—perhaps
May make my rage forget —

Siff. Oh, let it burst

On this grey head devoted to thy service !
But, when the storm has vented all its fury,
Thou then must hear—nay more, I know, thou wilt—
Wilt hear the calm, yet stronger voice of reason.
Thou must reflect what a whole people's safety,
The weal of trusted millions, should bear down,
Thyself the judge, thy fondest partial pleasure.
Thou must reflect that there are other duties,
A nobler pride, a more exalted honour,
Superior pleasures far, that will oblige,
Compel thee, to abide by this my deed,
Unwarranted perhaps in common justice,
But which Necessity, ev'n Virtue's tyrant,
With awful voice commanded—Yes, thou must,
In calmer hours, divest thee of thy love,
These common passions of the vulgar breast,
This boiling heat of youth, and be a king !
The lover of thy people !

Tancred. Truths ill-employ'd !
Abus'd to colour guilt !—a king ! a king !

Yes, I will be a king, but not a slave !
 In this will be a king ! in this my people
 Shall learn to judge how I will guard their rights,
 When they behold me vindicate my own.
 But have I, say, been treated like a king ?——
 Heavens ! could I stoop to such outrageous usage,
 I were a mean, a shameless wretch, unworthy
 To wield a scepter in a land of slaves,
 A foil abhorr'd of virtue, should belye
 My father's blood, belye those very maxims,
 At other times, you taught my youth—*Siffredi !*

[In a softened tone of voice.]

Siff. Behold, my prince, behold thy poor old servant,

Whose darling care, these twenty years, has been
 To nurse thee up to virtue ; who for thee,
 Thy glory and thy weal, renounces all,
 All interest or ambition can pour forth ;
 What many a selfish father would pursue
 Thro' treachery and crimes : behold him here,
 Bent on his feeble knees, to beg, conjure thee,
 With tears to beg thee, to controul thy passion,
 And save thyself, thy honour, and thy people !
 Kneeling with me, behold the many thousands,
 To thy protection trusted : Fathers, mothers,
 The sacred front of venerable age,
 The tender virgin and the helpless infant ;
 The ministers of Heaven, those, who maintain,
 Around thy throne, the majesty of rule ;
 And those, whose labour, scorch'd by wind and sun,
 Feeds the rejoicing public : see them all,
 Here at thy feet, conjuring thee to save them,
 From misery and war, from crimes and rapine !

Can

Can there be aught, kind Heaven! in self-indulgence
To weigh down these? this aggregate of love,
With which compar'd the dearest private passion
Is but the wasted dust upon the balance?

Turn not away—Oh, is there not some part,
In thy great heart, so sensible to kindness,
And generous warmth, some nobler part, to feel
The prayers and tears of these, the mingled voice
Of Heaven and earth!

Tancred, There is! and thou hast touch'd it.
Rise, rise, *Siffredi*—Oh! thou hast undone me,
Unkind old man!—O ill-entreated *Tancred*!
Which way so'er I turn, dishonour rears
Her hideous front—and misery and ruin!
Was it for this you took such care to form me?
For this imbrued me with the quickest sense
Of shame; these finer feelings, that ne'er vex
The common mass of mortals, dully happy
In blest insensibility? O rather
You should have fear'd my heart; taught me that power
And splendid interest lord it still o'er virtue;
That, gilded by prosperity and pride,
There is no shame, no meanness: temper'd thus,
I had been fit to rule a venal world.
Alas! what meant thy wantonness of prudence?
Why have you rais'd this miserable conflict
Betwixt the duties of the king and man?
Set virtue against virtue?—Ah, *Siffredi*!
'Tis thy superfluous, thy unfeeling wisdom,
That has involv'd me in a maze of error,
Almost beyond retreat—But hold, my soul,
The steady purpose—Tost by various passions,
To this eternal anchor keep—There is,

Can be no public without private virtue—
 Then mark me well, observe what I command;
 It is the sole expedient now remaining—
 To-morrow, when the senate meets again,
 Unfold the whole, unravel the deceit;
 Nor that alone, try to repair its mischief;
 There all thy power, thy eloquence and interest,
 Exert, to re-instate me in my rights,
 And from thy own dark snares to disembroil me—
 Start not, my lord—This must and shall be done!
 Or here, our friendship ends—Howe'er disguis'd,
 Whatever thy pretence, thou art a traitor.

Siff. I should indeed deserve the name of traitor,
 And ev'n a traitor's fate, had I so slightly,
 From principles so weak, done what I did,
 As e'er to disavow it—

Tancred. Ha!

Siff. My liege,
 Expect not this—Tho' practis'd long in courts,
 I have not so far learn'd this subtle trade
 To veer obedient with each gust of passion.
 I honour thee, I venerate thy orders,
 But honour more my duty. Nought on earth
 Shall ever shake me from that solid rock,
 Nor smiles, nor frowns.—

Tancred. You will not then?

Siff. I cannot!

Tanc. Away! begone!—O my *Rodolpho*, come,
 And save me from this traitor!—Hence, I say.
 Avoid my presence strait! and know, old man,
 Thou, my worst foe beneath the mask of friendship,
 Who, not content to trample in the dust
 My dearest rights, dost with cool insolence,
 Persist, and call it duty;—hadst thou not

A daughter

A daughrer that protects thee, thou should'st feel
The vengeance thou deserv'st—No reply!
Away!

SCENE IX.

TANCRED, RODOLPHO.

Rod. What can incense my prince so highly
Against his friend *Siffredi*?

Tancred. Friend! *Rodolpho*?
When I have told thee what this friend has done,
How play'd me like a boy, a base-born wretch,
Who had nor heart nor spirit! thou wilt stand
Amaz'd, and wonder at my stupid patience.

Rod. I heard, with mixt astonishment and grief,
The king's unjust dishonourable will,
Void in itself—I saw you stung with rage,
And writhing in the snare; just as I went,
At your command, to wait you here—but that
Was the king's deed, not his.

Tancred. O, he advis'd it!
These many years he has in secret hatch'd
This black contrivance, glories in the scheme,
And proudly plumes him with his traiterous virtue.
But that was nought, *Rodolpho*, nothing, nothing!
O that was gentle, blameless to what follow'd!
I had, my friend, to *Sigismunda* given,
To hush her fears, in the full gush of fondness,
A blank sign'd by my hand—and he (O Heavens!
Was ever such a wild attempt!)—he wrote
Beneath my name an absolute compliance

To this detested Will ; nay, dar'd to read it
 Before myself, on my insulted throne
 His idle pageant plac'd—Oh, words are weak
 To paint the pangs, the rage, the indignation,
 That whirl'd from thought to thought my soul in
 tempest,

Now on the point to burst, and now by shame
 Repress'd—But in the face of *Sicily*,
 All mad with acclamation, what, *Rodolpho*,
 What could I do? The sole relief that rose
 To my distracted mind, was to adjourn
 Th' assembly till to-morrow—But to-morrow
 What can be done?—Oh, it avails not what!
 I care not what is done—My only care
 Is how to clear my faith to *Sigismunda*.
 She thinks me false! She cast a look that kill'd me!
 Oh, I am base in *Sigismunda's* eye!
 The lowest of mankind, the most perfidious!

Rod. This was a strain of insolence indeed,
 A daring outrage, of so strange a nature
 As stuns me quite——

Tancred. Curs'd be my timid prudence!
 That dash'd not back, that moment, in his face
 The bold presumptuous lye—and curs'd this hand!
 That, from a start of poor dissimulation,
 Led off my *Sigismunda's* hated rival.
 Ah, then! what, poison'd by the false appearance,
 What, *Sigismunda*, were thy thoughts of me!
 How, in the silent bitterness of soul,
 How didst thou scorn me! hate mankind, thyself,
 For trusting to the vows of faithless *Tancred*!
 For such I seem'd—I was!—The thought distracts me!
 I should have cast a flattering world aside,

Rush'd

Rush'd from my throne, before them all avow'd her,
The choice, the glory, of my free-born heart,
And spurn'd the shameful fetters thrown upon it—
Instead of that—confusion!—what I did
Has clinch'd the chain, confirm'd *Siffredi's* crime,
And fix'd me down to infamy!

Rod. My lord,
Blame not the conduct, which your situation
Tore from your tortur'd heart—What could you do?
Had you, so circumstanc'd, in open senate,
Before th' astonish'd public, with no friends
Prepar'd, no party form'd, affronted thus
The haughty princess and her powerful faction,
Supported by this Will, the sudden stroke,
Abrupt and premature, might have recoil'd
Upon yourself, ev'n your own friends revolted,
And turn'd at once the publick scale against you.
Besides, consider, had you then detected
In its fresh guilt this action of *Siffredi*,
You must with signal vengeance have chastis'd
The treasonable deed—Nothing so mean
As weak insulted power that dares not punish.
And how would that have suited with your love?
His daughter present too? Trust me, your conduct,
Howe'er abhorrent to a heart like yours,
Was fortunate and wise—Not that I mean
E'er to advise submission—

Tancred. Heavens! Submission!
Could I descend to bear it, ev'n in thought,
Despise me, you, the world, and *Sigismunda*!
Submission!—No!—To-morrow's glorious light
Shall flash discovery on the scene of baseness.
Whatever be the risque, by Heavens! to-morrow,

I will o'erturn the dirty lye-built schemes
Of these old men, and shew my faithful senate,
That *Manfred's* son knows to assert and wear,
With undiminish'd dignity, that crown
This unexpected day has plac'd upon him.

But this, my friend, these stormy gusts of pride,
Are foreign to my love—Till *Sigismunda*
Be disabus'd, my breast is tumult all,
And can obey no settled course of reason.
I see her still, I feel her powerful image,
That look, where with reproach complaint was mix'd,
Big with soft woe and gentle indignation,
Which seem'd at once to pity and to scorn me—
Oh, let me find her! I too long have left
My *Sigismunda* to converse with tears,
A prey to thoughts that picture me a villain.
But, ah! how, clogg'd with this accursed state,
A tedious world, shall I now find access?
Her father too—Ten thousand horrors crowd
Into the wild fantastic eye of love—
Who knows what he may do? Come then, my friend,
And by thy sister's hand, oh, let me steal
A letter to her bosom—I no longer
Can bear her absence, by the just contempt
She now must brand me with, inflam'd to madness.
Fly, my *Rodolpho*, fly! engage thy sister
To aid my letter, and this very evening
Secure an interview—I would not bear
This rack another day, not for my kingdom!
Till then, deep-plung'd in solitudes and shades,
I will not see the hated face of man.

Thought drives on thought, on passions passions roll;
Her smiles alone can calm my raging soul.

The End of the Second Act.

A C T

ACT III. SCENE I.

SIGISMUNDA *alone, sitting in a disconsolate posture.*

AH, tyrant prince! ah, more than faithless *Faunced!*
 Ungenerous and inhuman in thy falshood!
 Hadst thou, this morning, when my hopeless heart,
 Submissive to my fortune and my duty,
 Had so much spirit left, as to be willing
 To give thee back thy vows,—ah! hadst thou then
 Confess'd the sad necessity thy state
 Impos'd upon thee, and with gentle friendship,
 Since we must part at last, our parting soften'd;
 I should indeed—I should have been unhappy,
 But not to this extreme—Amidst my grief,
 I had, with pensive pleasure, cherish'd still
 The sweet remembrance of thy former love,
 Thy image still had dwelt upon my soul,
 And made our guiltless woes not undelightful.
 But coolly thus—How could'st thou be so cruel,—
 Thus to revive my hopes, to soothe my love
 And call forth all its tenderness, then sink me
 In black despair?—What unrelenting pride
 Possess'd thy breast, that thou could'st bear unmov'd
 To see me bent beneath a weight of shame?
 Pangs thou canst never feel! How could'st thou drag me
 In barbarous triumph at a rival's car?
 How make me witness to a sight of horror?
 That hand, which, but a few short hours ago,
 So wantonly abus'd my simple faith,
 Before th' attesting world given to another,
 Irrevocably given!—There was a time,

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When

When the least cloud that hung upon my brow,
 Perhaps imagin'd only, touch'd thy pity.
 Then, brighten'd often by the ready tear,
 Thy looks were softness all; then the quick heart,
 In every nerve alive, forgot itself,
 And for each other then we felt alone.
 But now, alas! those tender days are fled;
 Now thou canst see me wretched, pierc'd with anguish,
 With studied anguish of thy own creating,
 Nor wet thy harden'd eye—Hold, let me think—
 I wrong thee sure; thou canst not be so base,
 As meanly in my misery to triumph—
 What is it then?—Why should I search for pain?—
 O, 'tis as bad!—'Tis fickleness of nature,
 'Tis sickly love extinguish'd by ambition—
 Is there, kind Heaven! no constancy in man?
 No steadfast truth, no generous fix'd affection,
 That can bear up against a selfish world?
 No, there is none—Ev'n *Tancred* is inconstant!

[*Rising.*

Hence! let me fly this scene!—Whate'er I see,
 These roofs, these walls, each object that surrounds me,
 Are tainted with his vows—But whither fly?
 The groves are worse, the soft retreat of *Belmont*,
 Its deepening glooms, gay lawns, and airy summits,—
 Will wound my busy memory to torture,
 And all its shades will whisper—faithless *Tancred*!
 My father comes—How, sunk in this disorder,
 Shall I sustain his presence!

SCENE

S C E N E II.

SIFFREDI, SIGISMUNDA.

Siff. Sigismunda;

My dearest child! I grieve to find thee thus
 A prey to tears. I know the powerful cause
 From which they flow, and therefore can excuse them,
 But not their wilful obstinate continuance.
 Come, rouse thee then, call up thy drooping spirit!
 Come, wake to reason from this dream of love,
 And shew the world thou art *Siffredi's* daughter!

Sigis. Alas! I am unworthy of that name.

Siff. Thou art indeed to blame; thou hast too rashly
 Engag'd thy heart, without a father's sanction.
 But this I can forgive. The king has virtues,
 That plead thy full excuse; nor was I void
 Of blame, to trust thee to those dangerous virtues.
 Then dread not my reproaches. Tho' he blames,
 Thy tender father pities more than blames thee.
 Thou art my daughter still; and, if thy heart
 Will now resume its pride, assert itself,
 And greatly rise superior to this trial,
 I to my warmest confidence again
 Will take thee, and esteem thee more my daughter.

Sigis. O, you are gentler far than I deserve!
 It is, it ever was, my darling pride,
 To bend my soul to your supreme commands,
 Your wisest will; and tho' by love betray'd—
 Alas! and punish'd too—I have transgress'd
 The nicest bounds of duty,—yet I feel
 A sentiment of tenderness, a source
 Of filial nature springing in my breast,

That, should it kill me, shall controul this passion,
And make me all submission and obedience
To you my honour'd lord, the best of fathers.

Siff. Come to my arms, thou comfort of my age!
Thou only joy and hope of these grey hairs!
Come! let me take thee to a parent's heart;
There, with the kindly aid of my advice,
Ev'n with the dew of these paternal tears,
Revive and nourish this becoming spirit—
Then thou dost promise me, my *Sigismunda*—
Thy father stoops to make it his request—
Thou wilt resign thy fond presumptuous hopes,
And henceforth never more indulge one thought
That in the light of love regards the king?

Sig. Hopes I have none!—Those by this fatal day
Are blasted all—But from my soul to banish,
While weeping memory there retains her seat,
Thoughts which the purest bosom might have cherish'd,
Once my delight, now ev'n in anguish charming,
Is more, a'as! my lord, than I can promise.

Siff. Absence and time, the softener of our passions,
Will conquer this. Mean time, I hope from thee
A generous great effort; that thou wilt now
Exert thy utmost force, nor languish thus
Beneath the vain extravagance of love.
Let not thy father blush to hear it said,
His daughter was so weak, e'er to admit
A thought so void of reason, that a king
Should to his rank, his honour and his glory,
The high important duties of a throne,
Ev'n to his throne itself, madly prefer
A wild romantic passion, the fond child
Of youthful dreaming thought and vacant hours;

That

That he should quit his heaven-appointed station,
 Desert his awful charge, the care of all
 The toiling millions which this isle contains ;
 Nay more, should plunge them into war and ruin :
 And all to soothe a sick imagination,
 A miserable weakness—Must for thee,
 To make thee blest, *Sicilia* be unhappy ?
 The king himself, lost to the nobler sense
 Of manly praise, become the piteous hero
 Of some soft tale, and rush on sure destruction ?
 Canst thou, my daughter, let the monstrous thought
 Possess one moment thy perverted fancy ?
 Rouse thee, for shame ! and, if a spark of virtue
 Lies slumbering in thy soul, bid it blaze forth :
 Nor sink unequal to the glorious lesson,
 This day thy lover gave thee from his throne.

Sigis. Ah ! that was not from virtue !—Had, my
 father,

That been his aim, I yield to what you say ;
 'Tis powerful truth, unanswerable reason.
 Then, then, with sad but dutious resignation,
 I had submitted as became your daughter ;
 But in that moment, when my humbled hopes
 Were to my duty reconcil'd, to raise them
 To yet a fonder height than e'er they knew,
 Then rudely dash them down—There is the sting !
 The blasting view is ever present to me——
 Why did you drag me to a sight so cruel ?

Siff. It was a scene to fire thy emulation.

Sigis. It was a scene of perfidy !—But know,
 I will do more than imitate the king—
 For he is false !—I, tho' sincerely pierc'd
 With the best, truest passion, ever touch'd

A vir-

A virgin's breast, here vow to Heaven and you;
 Tho' from my heart I cannot, from my hopes
 To cast this prince—What would you more, my father?

Siff. Yes, one thing more—thy father then is
 happy—

Tho' by the voice of innocence and virtue
 Absolv'd, we live not to ourselves alone:
 A rigorous world, with peremptory sway,
 Subjects us all, and ev'n the noblest most.
 This world from thee, my honour and thy own,
 Demands one step; a step, by which convinc'd
 The king may see thy heart disdains to wear
 A chain which his has greatly thrown aside.
 'Tis fitting too, thy sex's pride commands thee,
 To shew th' approving world thou canst resign,
 As well as he, nor with inferior spirit,
 A passion fatal to the public weal.
 But, above all, thou must root out for ever
 From the king's breast the least remain of hope,
 And henceforth make his mention'd love dishonour.
 These things, my daughter, that must needs be done,
 Can but this way be done—by the safe refuge,
 The sacred shelter of a husband's arms.
 And there is one—

Sigif. Good Heavens! what means my lord?

Siff. One of illustrious family, high rank,
 Yet still of higher dignity and merit,
 Who can and will protect thee; one to awe
 The king himself—Nay, hear me, *Sigismunda*—
 The noble *Osmond* courts thee for his bride,
 And has my plighted word—This day—

Sigif. [*knocking.*] My father!
 Let me with trembling arms embrace thy knees!

Oh,

Oh, if you ever wish to see me happy;
 If e'er in infant years I gave you joy,
 When, as I prattling twin'd around your neck,
 You snatch'd me to your bosom, kiss'd my eyes,
 And melting said you saw my mother there;
 Oh, save me from that worst severity
 Of fate! Oh, outrage not my breaking heart
 To that degree!—I cannot!—'tis impossible!—
 So soon withdraw it, give it to another—
 Hear me, my dearest father! hear the voice
 Of nature and humanity, that plead
 As well as justice for me!—Not to chuse
 Without your wise direction may be duty;
 But still my choice is free—That is a right,
 Which ev'n the lowest slave can never lose.
 And would you thus degrade me? make me base?
 For such it were to give my worthless person,
 Without my heart, an injury to *Osmond*,
 The highest can be done—Let me, my lord—
 Or I shall die, shall by the sudden change
 Be to distraction shock'd—Let me wear out
 My hapless days in solitude and silence,
 Far from the malice of a prying world!
 At least—you cannot sure refuse me this—
 Give me a little time—I will do all,
 All I can do, to please you!—Oh, your eye
 Sheds a kind beam—

Siff. My daughter! you abuse
 The softness of my nature—

Sigif. Here, my father,
 Till you relent, here will I grow for ever!

Siff. Rise, *Sigismunda*—Tho' you touch my heart,
 Nothing can shake th' inexorable dictates

Of honour, duty, and determin'd reason.
 Then, by the holy ties of filial love,
 Resolve, I charge thee, to receive earl *Osmond*,
 As suits the man who is thy father's choice,
 And worthy of thy hand—I go to bring him—
Sigis. Spare me, my dearest father!

Siff. [*aside.*] I must rush
 From her soft grasp, or nature will betray me!
 Oh, grant us, Heaven! that fortitude of mind,
 Which listens to our duty, not our passions—
 Quit me, my child!

Sigis. You cannot, O my father!
 You cannot leave me thus!

Siff. Come hither, *Laura*,
 Come to thy friend. Now shew thyself a friend.
 Combat her weakness; dissipate her tears;
 Cherish, and reconcile her to her duty.

S C E N E III.

SIGISMUNDA, LAURA.

Sigis. O woe on woe! distressed by love and duty!
 O every way unhappy *Sigismunda*!

Laura. Forgive me, Madam, if I blame your grief.
 How can you waste your tears on one so false?
 Unworthy of your tenderness? to whom
 Nought but contempt is due, and indignation?

Sigis. You know not half the horrors of my fate!
 I might perhaps have learn'd to scorn his falshood;
 Nay, when the first sad burst of tears was past,
 I might have rous'd my pride and scorn'd himself—
 But

But 'tis too much, this greatest, last misfortune—
Oh, whither shall I fly? Where hide me, *Laura*,
From the dire scene my father now prepares!

Laura. What thus alarms you, Madam?

Sigis. Can it be?

Can I——ah no!——at once give to another
My violated heart? in one wild moment?
He brings earl *Osmond* to receive my vows!
O dreadful change! for *Tancred* haughty *Osmond*!

Laura. Now, on my soul, 'tis what an outrag'd
heart,

Like yours, should wish!—I should, by Heavens,
esteem it

Most exquisite revenge!

Sigis. Revenge on whom?

On my own heart, already but too wretched!

Laura. On him! this *Tancred*! who has basely
sold,

For the dull form of despicable grandeur,
His faith, his love!—At once a slave and tyrant!

Sigis. Oh, rail at me, at my believing folly,
My vain ill-founded hopes; but spare him, *Laura*.

Laura. Who rais'd these hopes? who triumphs
o'er that weakness?

Pardon the word—You greatly merit him;
Better than him, with all his giddy pomp!
You rais'd him by your smiles when he was nothing!
Where is your woman's pride? that guardian spirit
Given us to dash the perfidy of man?
Ye Powers! I cannot bear the thought with patience—
Yet recent from the most unsparing vows
The tongue of love e'er lavish'd; from your hopes
So vainly, idly, cruelly deluded;
Before the public thus, before your father,

By

By an irrevocable solemn deed,
 With such inhuman scorn, to throw you from him!
 To give his faithless hand yet warm from thine,
 With complicated meanness, to *Constantia*!
 And, to complete his crime, when thy weak limbs
 Could scarce support thee, then, of thee regardless,
 To lead her off!

Sigis. That was indeed a fight
 To poison love! to turn it into rage
 And keen contempt!—What means this stupid weak-
 ness

That hangs upon me? Hence unworthy tears!
 Disgrace my cheek no more! No more, my heart,
 For one so coolly false, or meanly fickle——
 Oh, it imports not which—dare to suggest
 The least excuse!—Yes, traitor, I will wring
 Thy pride, will turn thy triumph to confusion!
 I will not pine away my days for thee,
 Sighing to brooks and groves; while, with vain pity,
 You in a rival's arms lament my fate——
 No! let me perish! ere I tamely be
 That soft, that patient, gentle *Sigismunda*,
 Who can console her with the wretched boast,
 She was for thee unhappy!——If I am,
 I will be nobly so!——*Sicilia's* daughters
 Shall wondering see in me a great example
 Of one who punish'd an ill-judging heart,
 Who made it bow to what it most abhor'd!
 Crush'd it to misery! for having thus
 So lightly listen'd to a worthless lover!

Laura. At last it mounts! the kindling pride of
 virtue!

Trust me, thy marriage will embitter his—

Sigis. O may the furies light his nuptial torch!

Be

Be it accurs'd as mine! for the fair peace,
 The tender joys of hymeneal love,
 May jealousy awak'd, and fell remorse,
 Pour all their fiercest venom thro' his breast——!
 Where the Fates lead, and blind revenge, I follow!—
 Let me not think—By injur'd love! I vow,
 Thou shalt, base prince! perfidious and inhuman!
 Thou shalt behold me in another's arms!
 In his thou hatest! *Osmond's!*

Laura. That will grind
 His heart with secret rage! Ay, that will sting
 His soul to madness, set him up a terror,
 A spectacle of woe to faithless lovers!——
 Your cooler thought, besides, will of the change
 Approve, and think it happy. Noble *Osmond*
 From the same stock with him derives his birth,
 First of *Sicilian* barons, prudent, brave,
 Of strictest honour, and by all rever'd——

Sigis. Talk not of *Osmond*, but perfidious *Tancred!*
 Rail at him, rail! invent new names of scorn!
 Assist me, *Laura*; lend my rage fresh fuel;
 Support my staggering purpose, which already
 Begins to fail me—Ah, my vaunts how vain!
 How have I ly'd to my own heart!—Alas!
 My tears return, the mighty flood o'erwhelms me!
 Ten thousand crowding images distract
 My tortur'd thought——And is it come to this?
 Our hopes? our vows? our oft repeated wishes,
 Breath'd from the fervent soul, and full of heaven,
 To make each other happy?—come to this!

Laura. If thy own peace and honour cannot keep
 Thy resolution fix'd; yet, *Sigismunda*,
 O think, how deeply, how beyond retreat,
 Thy father is engag'd.

Sigis.

Sigif. Ah, wretched weakness!
 That thus enthrals my soul, that chafes thence
 Each nobler thought, the sense of every duty!—
 And have I then no tears for thee, my father?
 Can I forget thy cares, from helpless years,
 Thy tenderness for me? an eye still beam'd
 With love? a brow that never knew a frown?
 Nor a harsh word thy tongue? Shall I for these
 Repay thy stooping venerable age,
 With shame, disquiet, anguish, and dishonour?
 It must not be!—Thou first of angels! come,
 Sweet Filial Piety!—and firm my breast!
 Yes, let one daughter to her fate submit,
 Be nobly wretched—but her father happy!—
Laura!—they come!—O Heavens! I cannot stand
 The horrid trial!—Open, open, earth!
 And hide me from their view!

Laura. Madam!

SCENE IV.

SIFFREDI, OSMOND, SIGISMUNDA, LAURA.

Siff. My daughter,
 Behold my noble friend who courts thy hand,
 And whom to call my son I shall be proud;
 Nor shall I less be pleas'd in his alliance,
 To see thee happy.

Osm. Think not, I presume,
 Madam, on this your father's kind consent,
 To make me blest. I love you from a heart,
 That seeks your good superior to my own;
 And will, by every art of tender friendship,
 Consult

Consult your dearest welfare. May I hope,
Yours does not disavow your father's choice?

Sigif. I am a daughter, Sir—and have no power
O'er my own heart—I die—Support me, *Laura*.

[*Faints.*

Siff. Help—Bear her off—She breathes—my
daughter!—

Sigif. Oh!—

Forgive my weakness—soft—my *Laura*, lead me—
To my apartment.

Siff. Pardon me, my lord,
If, by this sudden accident alarm'd,
I leave you for a moment.

SCENE V.

OSMOND alone.

Let me think——

What can this mean?——Is it to me aversion?
Or is it, as I fear'd, she loves another?
Ha!——yes——perhaps the king, the young count
Tancred!

They were bred up together——Surely that,
That cannot be—Has he not given his hand,
In the most solemn manner, to *Constantia*?
Does not his crown depend upon the deed?
No—if they lov'd, and this old statesman knew it,
He could not to a king prefer a subject.
His virtues I esteem—nay more, I trust them——
So far as virtue goes—but could he place
His daughter on the throne of *Sicily*——

Oh, 'tis a glorious bribe, too much for man!—
 What is it then?—I care not what it be.
 My honour now, my dignity demands,
 That my propos'd alliance, by her father,
 And ev'n herself accepted, be not scorn'd.
 I love her too—I never knew till now
 To what a pitch I lov'd her. Oh, she shot
 Ten thousand charms into my inmost soul!
 She look'd so mild, so amiably gentle,
 She bow'd her head, she glow'd with such confusion,
 Such loveliness of modesty! She is,
 In gracious mind, in manners, and in person,
 The perfect model of all female beauty!—
 She must be mine—She is!—If yet her heart
 Consents not to my happiness, her duty,
 Join'd to my tender cares, will gain so much
 Upon her generous nature—That will follow.

The man of sense, who acts a prudent part,
 Not flattering steals, but forms himself the heart.

The End of the Third Act.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

The Garden belonging to SIFFREDI's House.

SIGISMUNDA, LAURA.

SIGISMUNDA, *with a letter in her hand.*

'TIS done!—I am a slave!—The fatal vow
 Has pass'd my lips!—Methought in those
 sad moments,

The

The tombs around, the faints, the darken'd altar,
And all the trembling shrines, with horror shook.

But here is still new matter of distress.

O *Tancred*, cease to persecute me more!

O grudge me not some calmer state of woe!

Some quiet gloom to shade my hopeless days,

Where I may never hear of love and thee!—

Has *Laura* too conspir'd against my peace?

Why did you take this letter?—bear it back—

[Giving her the letter.

I will not court new pain.

Laura. Madam, *Rodolpho*

Urg'd me so much, nay, ev'n with tears conjur'd me,

But this once more to serve th' unhappy king—

For such; he said, he was—that tho' enrag'd,

Equal with thee, at his inhuman falsehood,

I could not to my brother's fervent prayers

Refuse this office—Read it—His excuses

Will only more expose his falsehood.

Sigisf. No.

It suits not *Osmond's* wife to read one line

From that contagious hand—she knows too well!

Laura. He paints him out distress'd beyond ex-
pression,

Ev'n on the point of madness. Wild as winds,

And fighting seas, he raves. His passions mix,

With ceaseless rage, all in each giddy moment.

He dies to see you, and to clear his faith.

Sigisf. Save me from that!—That would be worse
than all!

Laura. I but report my brother's words; who
then

Began to talk of some dark imposition,

That had deceiv'd us all: when, interrupted,

We

We heard your father and earl *Osmond* near,
As summon'd to *Constantia's* court they went.

Sigis. Ha! imposition?—Well! If I am doom'd
To be, o'er all my sex, the wretch of love,
In vain I would resist—Give me the letter—
To know the worst is some relief—Alas!
It was not thus, with such dire palpitations,
That, *Tancred*, once I us'd to read thy letters.

[*Attempting to read the letter, but gives it to Laura.*
Ah fond remembrance blinds me!—Read it, *Laura*.

LAURA reads.

Deliver me, Sigismunda, from that most exquisite misery which a faithful heart can suffer—To be thought base by her, from whose esteem even virtue borrows new charms. When I submitted to my cruel situation, it was not falsehood you beheld, but an excess of love. Rather than endanger that, I for a while gave up my honour. Every moment till I see you stabs me with severer pangs than real guilt itself can feel. Let me then conjure you to meet me in the garden, towards the close of the day, when I will explain this mystery. We have been most inhumanly abused; and that by the means of the very paper which I gave you, from the warmest sincerity of love, to assure to you the heart and hand of *Tancred*.

Sigis. There, *Laura*, there, the dreadful secret sprung!

That paper! ah, that paper! it suggests
A thousand horrid thoughts—I to my father
Gave it; and he perhaps—I dare not cast
A look that way—If yet indeed you love me,
O blast me not, kind *Tancred*, with the truth!
O pitying keep me ignorant for ever!
What strange peculiar misery is mine,

Reduc'd

Reduc'd to wish the man I love were false?
 Why was I hurry'd to a step so rash?
 Repairless woe!—I might have waited, sure,
 A few short hours—No duty that forbade—
 I ow'd thy love that justice; till this day
 Thy love an image of all-perfect goodness!
 A beam from Heaven that glow'd with every virtue!
 And have I thrown this prize of life away?
 The piteous wreck of one distracted moment?
 Ah, the cold prudence of remorseless age!
 Ah, parents, traitors to your children's bliss!
 Ah, curs'd, ah, blind revenge!—On every hand
 I was betray'd—You, *Laura*, too, betray'd me!—

Laura. Who, who, but he, whate'er he writes,
 betray'd you?

Or false, or pusillanimous. For once,
 I will with you suppose, that his agreement
 To the king's will was forg'd—Tho' forg'd by whom?
 Your father scorns the crime—Yet what avails it?
 This, if it clears his truth, condemns his spirit.
 A youthful king, by love and honour fir'd,
 Patient to sit on his insulted throne,
 And let an outrage, of so high a nature,
 Unpunish'd pass, uncheck'd, uncontradict'd—
 Oh, 'tis a meanness equal even to falsehood.

Sigis. Laura, no more—We have already judg'd
 Too largely without knowledge. Oft, what seems
 A trifle, a meer nothing, by itself,
 In some nice situations, turns the scale
 Of Fate, and rules the most important actions.
 Yes, I begin to feel a sad presage:
 I am undone, from that eternal source
 Of human woes—the judgment of the passions.

But what have I to do with theſe excuſes ?
 Oh, ceaſe, my treacherous heart, to give them room !
 It ſuits not thee to plead a lover's cauſe ;
 Ev'n to lament my fate is now diſhonour.
 Nought now remains, but, with relentleſs purpoſe,
 To ſhun all interviews, all clearing-up
 Of this dark ſcene ; to wrap myſelf in gloom,
 In ſolitude and ſhades ; there to devour
 The ſilent ſorrows ever ſwelling here ;
 And ſince I muſt be wretched—for I muſt——
 To claim the mighty miſery myſelf,
 Engroſs it all, and ſpare a hapleſs father.
 Hence, let me fly!—the hour approaches——
Laura. Madam,
 Behold he comes—the king——
Sigif. Heavens ! how eſcape ?
 No—I will ſtay—This one laſt meeting—Leave me.

SCENE II.

TANCRED, SIGISMUNDA.

Tancred. And are theſe long hours of torture paſt ?
 My life ! my *Sigismunda* !

[Throwing himſelf at her feet.]

Sigif. Riſe, my lord.

To ſee my ſovereign thus no more becomes me.

Tancred. Oh, let me kiſs the ground on which you tread !

Let me exhale my ſoul in ſoſteſt tranſport !

Since I again embrace my *Sigismunda* ! *[Riſing]*

Unkind ! how could'ſt thou ever deem me falſe ?

How

How thus dishonour love?—O I could much
 Embitter my complaint!—How low were then
 Thy thoughts of me? How didst thou then affront
 The human heart itself? After the vows,
 The fervent truth, the tender protestations,
 Which mine has often pour'd, to let thy breast,
 Whate'er th' appearance was, admit suspicion?

Sigi. How! when I heard myself your full consent
 To the late king's so just and prudent will?
 Heard it before you read, in solemn senate?
 When I beheld you give your royal hand,
 To her, whose birth and dignity of right
 Demands that high alliance? Yes, my lord,
 You have done well. The man, whom Heaven ap-
 points

To govern others, should himself first learn
 To bend his passions to the sway of reason.
 In all you have done well; but, when you bid
 My humbled hopes look up to you again,
 And sooth'd with wanton cruelty my weakness—
 That too was well—My vanity deserv'd
 The sharp rebuke, whose fond extravagance
 Could ever dream to balance your repose,
 Your glory, and the welfare of a people.

Taucred. Chide on, chide on. Thy soft reproaches
 now,

Instead of wounding, only soothe my fondness.
 No, no, thou charming consort of my soul!
 I never lov'd thee with such faithful ardour,
 As in that cruel miserable moment
 You thought me false; when ev'n my honour stoop'd
 To wear for thee a baffled face of baseness.
 It was thy barbarous father, *Sigismunda*,
 Who caught me in the toil. He turn'd that paper,

Q 2

Meant

Meant for th' assuring bond of nuptial love,
 To ruin it for ever; he, he wrote
 That forg'd consent, you heard, beneath my name;
 Nay, dar'd before my out-rag'd throne to read it!
 Had he not been thy father—Ha! my love!
 You tremble, you grow pale.

Sigif. Oh leave me, *Tancred!*

Tancred. No!—Leave thee?—Never! never! till
 you set

My heart at peace, till these dear lips again
 Pronounce thee mine! Without thee I renounce
 Myself, my friends, the world—Here on this hand—

Sigif. My lord, forget that hand, which never now
 Can be to thine united—

Tancred. *Sigismunda!*

What dost thou mean?—Thy words, thy look, thy
 manner,

Seem to conceal some horrid secret—Heavens!—
 No—That was wild—Distraction fires the thought!—

Sigif. Enquire no more—I never can be thine.

Tancred. What, who shall interpose? who dares
 attempt

To brave the fury of an injur'd king?
 Who, ere he sees thee ravish'd from his hopes,
 Will wrap all blazing *Sicily* in flames—

Sigif. In vain your power, my lord—This fatal
 error,

Join'd to my father's unrelenting will,
 Has plac'd an everlasting bar betwixt us—
 I am—Earl *Osmond's*—Wife.

Tancred. Earl *Osmond's* wife!—

[After a long pause, during which they
 look at one another with the highest
 agitation and most tender distress.

S

Heavens!

Heavens! did I hear thee right? what! marry'd?
marry'd!

Lost to thy faithful *Tancred!* lost for ever!
Could'st thou then doom me to such matchless woe,
Without so much as hearing me?—Distraction!—
Alas! what hast thou done? Ah, *Sigismunda!*—
'Thy rash credulity has done a deed,
Which of two happiest lovers—that e'er felt
The blissful power, has made two finish'd wretches!
But—Madness!—Sure, thou know'st it cannot be!
This hand is mine! a thousand thousand vows—

SCENE III.

TANCRED, OSMOND, SIGISMUNDA.

OSMOND.

[Snatching her hand from the king.]

Madam, this hand, by the most solemn rites,
A little hour ago, was given to me;
And, did not sov'reign honour now command me,
Never but with my life to quit my claim,
I would renounce it—thus!

Tancred. Ha! who art thou?

Presumptuous man!

Sigif. [aside.] Where is my father? Heavens!

[Goes out.]

Osmon. One thou should'st better know—Yes—view
me—one!

Who can and will maintain his rights and honour,
Against a faithless prince, an upstart king,
Whose first base deed is what a harden'd tyrant
Would blush to act.

Q 3

Tancred.

Tancred. Insolent *Osmond*! know,
 This upstart king will hurl confusion on thee,
 And all who shall invade his sacred rights,
 Prior to thine—Thine founded on compulsion,
 On infamous deceit, while his proceed
 From mutual love and free long-plighted faith.
 She is, and shall be mine!—I will annul,
 By the high power with which the laws invest me,
 Those guilty forms in which you have entrap'd,
 Basely entrap'd, to thy detested nuptials,
 My queen betroth'd; who has my heart, my hand,
 And shall partake my throne—If, haughty lord,
 If this thou didst not know, then know it now!
 And know besides, as I have told thee this,
 Should'st thou but think to urge thy treason further—
 Than treason more! Treason against my love!—
 Thy life shall answer for it!

Ofm. Ha! my life!—
 It moves my scorn to hear thy empty threats.
 When was it that a *Norman* baron's life
 Became so vile, as on the frown of kings
 To hang?—Of that, my lord, the law must judge:
 Or, if the law be weak, my guardian sword—

Tancred. Dare not to touch it, traitor! lest my rage
 Break loose, and do a deed that misbecomes me.

S C E N E IV.

TANCRED, SIFFREDI, OSMOND.

Siff. [*entering.*] My gracious lord! what is it I
 behold!

My sovereign in contention with his subjects?

Surely

Surely this house deserves from royal *Tancred*
A little more regard, than to be made
A scene of trouble and unseemly jars.
It grieves my soul, it baffles every hope,
It makes me sick of life, to see thy glory
Thus blasted in the bud—Heaven! can your highness
From your exalted character descend,
The dignity of virtue; and, instead
Of being the protector of our rights,
The holy guardian of domestic bliss,
Unkindly thus disturb the sweet repose,
The secret peace of families, for which
Alone the freeborn race of man to laws
And government submitted?

Tancred. My lord *Siffredi*,
Spare thy rebuke. The duties of my station
Are not to me unknown.—But thou, old man,
Dost thou not blush to talk of rights invaded?
And of our best, our dearest bliss disturb'd?
Thou! who with more than barbarous perfidy
Hast trampled all allegiance, justice, truth,
Humanity itself, beneath thy feet?
Thou know'st thou hast—I could, to thy confusion,
Return thy hard reproaches; but I spare thee
Before this lord, for whose ill-sorted friendship
Thou hast most basely sacrific'd thy daughter.
Farewell, my lord!—For thee, lord constable,
Who dost presume to lift thy furlly eye
To my soft love, my gentle *Sigismunda*,
I once again command thee, on thy life——
Yes—chew thy rage—but mark me—on thy life,
No further urge thy arrogant pretensions!

SCENE V.

SIFFREDI, OSMOND.

Osmon. Ha! arrogant pretensions! heaven and earth!
 What! arrogant pretensions to my wife!
 My wedded wife! Where are we? In a land
 Of civil rule, of liberty and laws?—
 Not on my life pursue them?—Giddy prince!
 My life disdains thy nod. It is the gift
 Of parent Heaven, who gave me too an arm,
 A spirit to defend it against tyrants.
 The *Norman* race, the sons of mighty *Rollo*,
 Who, rushing in a tempest from the North,
 Great nurse of generous freemen! bravely won
 With their own swords their seats, and still possess them
 By the same noble tenure, are not us'd
 To hear such language—If I now desist,
 Then brand me for a coward! deem me villian!
 A traitor to the public! By this conduct
 Deceiv'd, betray'd, insulted, tyranniz'd.
 Mine is a common cause. My arm shall guard,
 Mix'd with my own, the rights of each *Sicilian*,
 Of social life, and of mankind in general.
 Ere to thy tyrant rage they fall a prey,
 I shall find means to shake thy tottering throne,
 Which this illegal, this perfidious usage
 Forfeits at once, and crush thee in the ruins!—
Constantia is my queen!

Siff. Lord constable,
 Let us be steadfast in the right; but let us
 Act with cool prudence, and with manly temper,
 As well as manly firmness. True, I own,

Th'

'Th' indignities you suffer are so high,
 As might ev'n justify what now you threaten.
 But if, my lord, we can prevent the woes,
 The cruel horrors of intestine war,
 Yet hold untouch'd our liberties and laws;
 Oh, let us, rais'd above the turbid sphere
 Of little selfish passions, nobly do it!
 Nor to our hot intemperate pride pour out
 A dire libation of *Sicilian* blood.
 'Tis godlike magnanimity, to keep,
 When most provok'd, our reason calm and clear,
 And execute her will, from a strong sense
 Of what is right, without the vulgar aid
 Of heat and passion, which, tho' honest, bear us
 Often too far. Remember that my house
 Protects my daughter still; and ere I saw her
 Thus ravish'd from us by the arm of power,
 This hand should act the *Roman* father's part.
 Fear not; be temperate; all will yet be well.
 I know the king. At first his passions burst
 Quick as the lightning's flash; but in his breast
 Honour and justice dwell—Trust me, to reason
 He will return.

Osm. He will!—By Heavens, he shall!—
 You know the king—I wish, my lord *Siffredi*,
 That you had deign'd to tell me all you knew—
 And would you have me wait, with duteous patience,
 Till he return to reason? Ye just Powers!
 When he has planted on our necks his foot,
 And trod us into slaves; when his vain pride
 Is cloy'd with our submission; if, at last,
 He finds his arm too weak to shake the frame
 Of wide-establish'd order out of joint,
 And overturn all justice; then, perchance,

Q 5

He,

He, in a fit of sickly kind repentance,
 May make a merit to return to reason.
 No, no, my lord!—There is a nobler way,
 To teach the blind oppressive *Fury* reason:
 Oft has the lustre of avenging steel
 Unseal'd her stupid eyes—The sword is reason!

S C E N E .VI.

SIFFREDI, OSMOND, RODOLPHO, *with Guards.*

Rodol. My lord high constable of *Sicily*,
 In the king's name, and by his special order,
 I here arrest you prisoner of state.

Osm. What king? I know no king of *Sicily*—
 Unless he be the husband of *Constantia*.

Rodol. Then know him now—Behold his royal
 orders

To bear you to the castle of *Palermo*.

Siff. Let the big torrent foam its madness off.
 Submit, my lord—No castle long can hold
 Our wrongs—This, more than friendship or alliance,
 Confirms me thine; this binds me to thy fortunes,
 By the strong tie of common injury,
 Which nothing can dissolve—I grieve, *Rodo'pho*,
 To see the reign, in such unhappy sort,
 Begin.

Osm. The reign! the usurpation call it!
 This meteor king may blaze awhile, but soon
 Must spend his idle terrors—Sir, lead on—
 Farewell, my lord—More than my life and fortune,
 Remember well, is in your hands—my honour!

Siff. Our honour is the same. My son, farewell—
 We shall not long be parted. On these eyes
 Sleep shall not shed his balm, till I behold thee
 Restor'd to freedom, or partake thy bonds.

Ev'n noble courage is not void of blame,
 Till nobler patience sanctifies its flame.

The End of the Fourth Act.

ACT V. SCENE I.

SIFFREDI, *alone.*

THE prospect lows around. I found the king,
 Tho' calm'd a little, with subsiding tempest,
 As suits his generous nature, yet in love
 Abated nought, most ardent in his purpose;
 Inexorably fix'd, whate'er the risque,
 To claim my daughter, and dissolve this marriage—
 I have embark'd, upon a perilous sea,
 A mighty treasure. Here the rapid youth,
 Th' impetuous passions of a lover-king,
 Check my bold course; and there, the jealous pride,
 Th' impatient honour of a haughty lord
 Of the first rank, in interest and dependants
 Near equal to the king, forbid retreat.
 My honour too, the same unchang'd conviction,
 That these my measures were, and still remain,
 Of absolute necessity, to save
 The land from civil fury, urge me on.

Q 6

But

But how proceed?—I only faster rush
 Upon the desperate evils I would shun.
 Whate'er the motive be, deceit, I fear,
 And harsh unnatural force, are not the means
 Of public welfare or of private bliss—
 Bear witness, Heaven! thou mind-inspecting eye!
 My breast is pure. I have prefer'd my duty,
 The good and safety of my fellow-subjects,
 To all those views that fire the selfish race
 Of men, and mix them in eternal broils.

Enter an OFFICER belonging to SIFFREDI.

Officer. My lord, a man of noble port, his face
 Wrap'd in disguise, is earnest for admission.

Siff. Go, bid him enter—— [*Officer goes out.*]
 Ha! wrap'd in disguise!
 And at this late unseasonable hour!
 When o'er the world tremendous midnight reigns,
 By the dire gloom of raging tempest doubled—

SCENE II.

SIFFREDI, OSMOND *discovering himself.*

Siff. What! ha! earl *Osmond*, you?—Welcome,
 once more,
 To this glad roof!—But why in this disguise?
 Would I could hope the king exceeds his promise!
 I have his faith, soon as to-morrow's sun
 Shall gild *Sicilia's* cliffs, you shall be free.—
 Has some good angel turn'd his heart to justice?
Os. It is not by the favour of count *Tancred*
 That I am here. As much I scorn his favour,
 As I defy his tyranny and threats——

Our

Our friend *Goffredo*, who commands the castle,
 On my parole, ere dawn, to render back
 My person, has permitted me this freedom.
 Know then; the faithless outrage of to-day,
 By him committed whom you call the king,
 Has rous'd *Constantia's* court. Our friends, the friends
 Of virtue, justice, and of public faith,
 Ripe for revolt, are in high ferment all.
 This, this, they say, exceeds whate'er deform'd
 The miserable days we saw beneath
William the Bad. This saps the solid base,
 At once, of government and private life;
 This shameless imposition on the faith,
 The majesty of senates, this lewd insult,
 This violation of the rights of men;
 Added to these, his ignominious treatment
 Of her th' illustrious offspring of our kings,
Sicilia's hope, and now our royal mistrefs.
 You know, my lord, how grossly these infringe
 The late king's will; which orders, if count *Tancred*
 Make not *Constantia* partner of his throne,
 That he be quite excluded the succession,
 And she to *Henry* given, king of the *Romans*,
 The potent emperor *Barbarossa's* son,
 Who seeks with earnest instance her alliance.
 I thence of you, as guardian of the laws,
 As guardian of this Will to you entrusted,
 Desire, nay more, demand your instant aid,
 To see it put in vigorous execution.

Siff. You cannot doubt, my lord, of my concurrence.

Who more than I have labour'd this great point?

'Tis my own plan. And, if I drop it now,

I should

I should be justly branded with the shame
Of rash advice, or despicable weakness.

But let us not precipitate the matter.

Constantia's friends are numerous and strong ;

Yet *Tancred's*, trust me, are of equal force.

E'er since the secret of his birth was known,

The people all are in a tumult hurld

Of boundless joy, to hear there lives a prince

Of mighty *Guiscard's* line. Numbers, besides,

Of powerful barons, who at heart had pin'd,

To see the reign of their renown'd forefathers,

Won by immortal deeds of matchless valour,

Pass from the gallant *Normans* to the *Suevi*,

Will, with a kind of rage, espouse his cause—

'Tis so, my lord—be not by passion blinded—

'Tis surely so—Oh, if our prating virtue

Dwells not in words alone—Oh, let us join,

My generous *Osmond*, to avert these woes,

And yet sustain our tottering *Norman* kingdom !

Osmond. But how, *Siffredi* ? how ?—If by soft means

We can maintain our rights, and save our country,

May his unnatural blood first stain the sword,

Who with unpitying fury first shall draw it !

Siffredi. I have a thought—The glorious work be
thine.

But it requires an awful flight of virtue,

Above the passions of the vulgar breast,

And thence from thee I hope it, noble *Osmond*—

Suppose my daughter, to her God devoted,

Were plac'd within some convent's sacred verge,

Beneath the dread protection of the altar—

Osmond. Ere then, by Heavens ! I would devoutly
shave

My holy scalp, turn whining monk myself,

And

And pray incessant for the tyrant's safety!—
 What! How! because an insolent invader,
 A sacrilegious tyrant, in contempt
 Of all those noblest rights, which to maintain
 Is man's peculiar pride, demands my wife;
 That I shall thus betray the common cause
 Of human kind, and tamely yield her up,
 Ev'n in the manner you propose—Oh, then
 I were supremely vile! degraded, sham'd!
 The scorn of manhood! and abhorr'd of honour!

Siff. There is, my lord, an honour, the calm
 child

Of reason, of humanity and mercy,
 Superior far to this punctilious demon,
 That singly minds itself, and oft embroils
 With proud barbarian niceties the world!

Osmond. My lord, my lord!—I cannot brook your
 prudence;

It holds a pulse unequal to my blood—
 Unblemish'd honour is the flower of virtue!
 The vivifying soul! and he who flights it
 Will leave the other dull and lifeless dross.

Siff. No more—you are too warm.

Osmond. You are too cool.

Siff. Too cool, my lord? I were indeed too cool,
 Not to resent this language, and to tell thee—
 I wish earl *Osmond* were as cool as I
 To his own selfish bliss—ay, and as warm
 To that of others—But of this no more—
 My daughter is thy wife—I gave her to thee,
 And will against all force maintain her thine.
 But think not I will catch thy headlong passions,
 Whirl'd in a blaze of madness o'er the land;
 Or, till the last extremity compel me,

Risque

I should be justly branded with the shame
 Of rash advice, or despicable weakness.
 But let us not precipitate the matter.
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 Yet *Tancred's*, trust me, are of equal force.
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 To see the reign of their renown'd forefathers,
 Won by immortal deeds of matchless valour,
 Pass from the gallant *Normans* to the *Suevi*,
 Will, with a kind of rage, espouse his cause—
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 My daughter is thy wife—I gave her to thee,
 And will against all force maintain her thine.
 But think not I will catch thy headlong passions,
 Whirl'd in a blaze of madness o'er the land;
 Or, till the last extremity compel me,

Risque

Risque the dire means of war—The king to-morrow
Will set you free ; and, if by gentle means
He does not yield my daughter to your arms,
And wed *Constantia*, as the will requires,
Why then expect me on the side of justice—
Let that suffice.

Os. It does—Forgive my heat,
My rankled mind, by injuries inflam'd,
May be too prompt to take and give offence.

Siff. 'Tis past—Your wrongs, I own, may well
transport

The wisest mind—But henceforth, noble *Osmond*,
Do me more justice, honour more my truth,
Nor mark me with an eye of squint suspicion—
These jars apart—you may repose your soul
On my firm faith and unremitting friendship.
Of that I sure have given exalted proof,
And the next sun we see shall prove it further—
Return, my son, and from your friend *Goffredo*
Release your word. There try, by soft repose,
To calm your breast.

Os. Bid the vext ocean sleep,
Swept by the pinions of the raging north—
But your frail age, by care and toil exhausted,
Demands the balm of all-repairing rest.

Siff. Soon as to-morrow's dawn shall streak the
skies,

I, with my friends, in solemn state assembled,
Will to the palace, and demand your freedom :
Then by calm reason, or by higher means,
The king shall quit his claim, and in the face
Of *Sicily*, my daughter shall be yours.
Farewell.

Os. My lord, good night.

SCENE /

SCENE III.

OSMOND *alone.**(After a long pause.)* I like him not——

Yes—I have mighty matter of suspicion.
 'Tis plain—I see it lurking in his breast,
 He has a foolish fondness for this king—
 My honour is not safe, while here my wife
 Remains—Who knows but he this very night
 May bear her to some convent as he mention'd—
 The king too—tho' I smother'd up my rage,
 I mark'd it well—will set me free to-morrow.
 Why not to-night? He has some dark design—
 By Heavens! he has—I am abus'd most grossly;
 Made the vile tool of this old statesman's schemes;
 Marry'd to one—Ay, and he knew it,—one
 Who loves young *Tancred*! Hence her swooning,
 tears,

And all her soft distress, when she disgrac'd me
 By basely giving her perfidious hand
 Without her heart—Hell and perdition! this,
 This is the perfidy!—This is the fell,
 The keen, envenom'd, exquisite disgrace!
 Which to a man of honour even exceeds
 The falsehood of the person—But I now
 Will rouse me from the poor tame lethargy,
 By my believing fondness cast upon me.
 I will not wait his crawling timid motions,
 Perhaps to blind me meant, which he to-morrow
 Has promis'd to pursue. No! ere his eyes
 Shall open on to-morrow's orient beam,

I will

I will convince him that earl *Osmond* never
 Was form'd to be his dupe—I know full well
 Th' important weight and danger of the deed :
 But to a man, whom greater dangers press,
 Driven to the brink of infamy and horror,
 Rashness itself, and utter desperation,
 Are the best prudence—I will bear her off
 This night, and lodge her in a place of safety.
 I have a trusty band that waits not far.
 Hence ! let me lose no time—One rapid moment
 Should ardent form, at once, and execute
 A bold design—'Tis fix'd—'Tis done !—Yes, then,
 When I have seiz'd the prize of love and honour,
 And with a friend secur'd her ; to the castle
 I will repair, and claim *Goffredo's* promise
 To rise with all his garrison—my friends
 With brave impatience wait. The mine is laid,
 And only waits my kindling touch to spring.

S C E N E IV.

SIGISMUNDA's *Apartment.*

SIGISMUNDA, LAURA.

Laura. Heavens ! 'tis a fearful night !*Sigi.* Ah ! the black rage

Of midnight tempest, or th' assuring smiles
 Of radiant morn, are equal all to me.
 Nought now has charms or terrors to my breast,
 The feat of stupid woe !—Leave me, my *Laura*.
 Kind rest, perhaps, may hush my woes a little—

Oh,

Oh, for that quiet sleep that knows no morning !

Laura. Madam, indeed, I know not how to go.
Indulge my fondness—Let me watch a while
By your sad bed, till these dread hours shall pass.

Sigisf. Alas ! what is the toil of elements,
This idle perturbation of the sky,
To what I feel within !—Oh, that the fires
Of pitying Heaven would pour their fury here !
Goodnight, my dearest *Laura* !

Laura. Oh, I know not
What this oppression means—But 'tis with pain,
With tears, I can persuade myself to leave you—
Well then—Good night, my dearest *Sigismunda* !

SCENE V.

SIGISMUNDA.

And am I then alone ?—The most undone,
Most wretched being now beneath the cope
Of this affrighting gloom that wraps the world !——
I said I did not fear—Ah me ! I feel
A shivering horror run thro' all my powers !
Oh, I am nought but tumult, fears, and weakness !
And yet how idle fear, when hope is gone,
Gone, gone for ever !—Oh, thou gentle scene

[Looking towards her bed.]

Of sweet repose, where, by th' oblivious draught
Of each sad toilsome day to peace restor'd,
Unhappy mortals lose their woes awhile,
Thou hast no peace for me !—What shall I do ;
How pass this dreadful night, so big with terror ?—
Here,

Here, with the midnight shades, here will I sit,

[Sitting down.]

A prey to dire despair, and ceaseless weep

The hours away—Bless me—I heard a noise——

[Starting up.]

No—I mistook—Nothing but silence reigns

And awful midnight round—Again!—O Heavens!

My lord the king!

SCENE VI.

TANCRED, SIGISMUNDA.

Tancred. Be not alarm'd, my love!

Sigif. My royal lord! why at this midnight hour,
How came you hither?

Tancred. By that secret way
My love contriv'd, when we, in happier days,
Us'd to devote these hours, so much in vain,
To vows of love and everlasting friendship.

Sigif. Why will you thus persist to add new stings
To her distress, who never can be thine?

Oh, fly me! fly! You know——

Tancred. I know too much.

Oh, how I could reproach thee, *Sigismunda*!
Pour out my injur'd soul in just complaints!
But now the time permits not these swift moments—
I told thee how thy father's artifice
Forc'd me to seem perfidious in thy eyes.
Ah, fatal blindness! not to have observ'd
The mingled pangs of rage and love that shook me;
When, by my cruel public situation

Compell'd,

Compell'd, I only feign'd consent, to gain
 A little time, and more secure thee mine.
 E'er since—A dreadful interval of care!
 My thoughts have been employ'd, not without hope,
 How to defeat *Siffedri's* barbarous purpose.
 But thy credulity has ruin'd all,
 Thy rash, thy wild—I know not what to name it—
 Oh, it has prov'd the giddy hopes of man
 To be delusion all, and sickening folly!

Sigif. Ah, generous *Tancred*! ah, thy truth destroys
 me!

Yes, yes, 'tis I alone am false!
 My hasty rage, join'd to my tame submission,
 More than the most exalted filial duty
 Could e'er demand, has dash'd our cup of fate
 With bitterness unequal'd—But, alas!
 What are thy woes to mine?—to mine!—just Heaven!--
 Now is thy turn of vengeance—hate, renounce me!
 Oh, leave me to the fate I well deserve,
 To sink in hopeless misery!—at least,
 Try to forget the worthless *Sigismunda*!

Tancred. Forget thee! No! Thou art my soul
 itself!

I have no thought, no hope, no wish but thee!
 Ev'n this repented injury, the fears,
 That rouse me all to madness, at the thought
 Of losing thee, the whole collected pains
 Of my full heart, serve but to make thee dearer!
 Ah, how forget thee!—Much must be forgot,
 Ere *Tancred* can forget his *Sigismunda*!

Sigif. But you, my lord, must make that great ef-
 fort.

Tancred. Can *Sigismunda* make it?

Sigif.

Sigif. Ah! I know not
 With what success—But all that feeble woman
 And love-entangled reason can perform,
 I, to the utmost, will exert to do it.

Tancred. Fear not—'Tis done!—If thou canst form
 the thought,
 Success is sure—I am forgot already!

Sigif. Ah, *Tancred*!—But, my lord, respect me
 more.

Think who I am, what can you now propose?

Tancred. To claim the plighted vows which Hea-
 ven has heard,
 To vindicate the rights of holy love
 By faith and honour bound, to which compar'd
 These empty forms, which have ensnar'd thy hand,
 Are impious guile, abuse, and profanation—
 Nay, as a king, whose high prerogative
 By this unlicens'd marriage is affronted,
 To bid the laws themselves pronounce it void.

Sigif. Honour, my lord, is much too proud to
 catch

At every slender twig of nice distinctions.
 These for th'unfeeling vulgar may do well:
 But those, whose souls are by the nicer rule
 Of virtuous delicacy nobly sway'd,
 Stand at another bar than that of laws.
 Then cease to urge me—Since I am not born
 To that exalted fate to be your queen—
 Or, yet a dearer name—to be your wife!——
 I am the wife of an illustrious lord
 Of your own princely blood; and what I am,
 I will with proper dignity remain.
 Retire, my royal lord—There is no means

To

To cure the wounds this fatal day has given.
We meet no more!

Tancred. Oh, barbarous *Sigismunda*!
And canst thou talk thus steadily? thus treat me
With such unpitying, unrelenting rigour?
Poor is the love, that rather than give up
A little pride, a little formal pride,
The breath of vanity! can bear to see
The man, whose heart was once so dear to thine
By many a tender vow so mix'd together,
A prey to anguish, fury, and distraction!—
Thou canst not surely make me such a wretch,
Thou canst not, *Sigismunda*!—Yet relent,
O save us yet!—*Rodolpho*, with my guards,
Waits in the garden—Let us seize the moments
We ne'er may have again—With more than power
I will assert thee mine, with fairest honour.
The world shall ev'n approve; each honest bosom
Swell with a kindred joy to see us happy.

Sigif. The world approve! What is the world to
me?

The conscious mind is its own awful world.—
And yet, perhaps, if thou wert not a king,
I know not, *Tancred*, what I might have done,
'Then, then, my conduct, sanctify'd by love,
Could not be deem'd, by the severest judge,
'The mean effect of interest or ambition.
But now not all my partial heart can plead,
Shall ever shake th' unalterable dictates
That tyrannize my breast.

Tancred. 'Tis well—No more—
I yield me to my fate—Yes, yes, inhuman!
Since thy barbarian heart is steel'd by pride,
Shut up to love and pity, here behold me

Cast

Cast on the ground, a vile and abject wretch !
 Lost to all cares, all dignities, all duties !
 Here will I grow, breathe out my faithful soul,
 Here at thy feet—Death, death alone shall part us !

Sigif. Have you then vow'd to drive me to perdition ?

What can I more?—Yes, *Tancred* ! once again
 I will forget the dignity my station
 Commands me to sustain—for the last time
 Will tell thee, that, I fear, no ties, no duty,
 Can ever root thee from my hapless bosom.
 Oh, leave me ! fly me ! were it but in pity !—
 To see what once we tenderly have lov'd,
 Cut off from every hope—cut off for ever !
 Is pain thy generosity should spare me.
 Then rise, my lord ; and, if you truly love me,
 If you respect my honour, nay, my peace,
 Retire ! for tho' th' emotions of my heart
 Can ne'er alarm my virtue ; yet, alas !
 They tear it so, they pierce it with such anguish—
 Oh, 'tis too much !—I cannot bear the conflict !

SCENE VII.

TANCRED, OSMOND, SIGISMUNDA.

Osmond. (entering.) Turn, tyrant ! turn ! and answer
 to my honour,

For this thy base insufferable outrage !

Tancred. Insolent traitor ! think not to escape
 Thyself my vengeance ! [*They fight. Osmond falls.*
Sigif.

SIGISMUNDA. 361

Sigif. Help here! Help!—O Heavens!

[Throwing herself down by him.]

Alas! my lord, what meant your headlong rage?
That faith, which I this day, upon the altar,
To you devoted, is unblemish'd, pure,
As vestal truth; was resolutely yours,
Beyond the power of aught on earth to shake it.

Ofm. Perfidious woman! die!——

[Shortening his sword, he plunges it into her breast.]

——and to the grave

Attend a husband, yet but half aveng'd!

Tancred. O horror! horror! execrable villain!

Ofm. And, tyrant! thou!—Thou shalt not o'er
my tomb

Exult—'Tis well—'Tis great!—I die content!—

[Dies.]

SCENE VIII.

TANCRED, SIFFREDI, RODOLPHO, SIGISMUNDA,
LAURA.

Tancred. *[Throwing himself down by Sigismunda.]*
Quick! here! bring aid!—All in *Palermo* bring
Whose skill can save her!—Ah! that gentle bosom
Pours fast the streams of life.

Sigif. All aid is vain.

I feel the powerful hand of death upon me—
But, ho! it sheds a sweetness thro' my fate,
That I am thine again; and, without blame,
May in my *Tancred's* arms resign my soul!

Tancred. Oh, death is in that voice! so gently
mild,

So sadly sweet, as mixes ev'n with mine
 The tears of hovering angels!—Mine again!—
 And is it thus the cruel Fates have join'd us?
 Are these the horrid nuptials they prepare
 For love like ours! Is virtue thus rewarded!
 Let not my impious rage accuse just Heaven!
 Thou, *Tancred*! Thou hast murder'd *Sigismunda*?
 That furious man was but the tool of Fate,
 I, I the cause!—But I will do thee justice
 On this deaf heart! that to thy tender wisdom
 Refus'd an ear—Yes, death shall soon unite us!
Sigif. Live, live, my *Tancred*!—Let my death
 suffice

To expiate all that may have been amiss,
 May it appease the Fates, avert their fury
 From thy propitious reign! Mean-time, of me
 And of thy glory mindful, live, I charge thee,
 To guard our friends, and make thy people happy.—

[*Observing Siffredi fixt in astonishment and grief.*
 My father!—Oh! how shall I lift my eyes
 To thee, my sinking father!

Siff. Awful Heaven!

I am chaste'd—My dearest child!—

Sigif. Where am I?

A fearful darkness closes all around—
 My friends! We needs must part—I must obey
 Th'imperious call—Farewell, my *Laura*! cherish
 My poor afflicted father's age—*Rodolpho*,
 Now is the time to watch th' unhappy king,
 With all the care and tenderness of friendship.—
 Oh my dear father! bow'd beneath the weight
 Of age and grief—the victim ev'n of virtue,
 Receive my last adieu!—Where art thou, *Tancred*?
 Give me thy hand—But, ah!—it cannot save me
 From

From the dire king of terrors, whose cold power
Creeps o'er my heart——Oh!

Tancred. How these pangs distract me!
O lift thy gracious eyes;——Thou leav'st me then!
Thou leav'st me, *Sigismunda*!

Sigis. Yet a moment——

I had, my *Tancred*, something more to say——
Yes——but thy love and tenderness for me
Sure makes it needless——Harbour no resentment
Against my father; venerate his zeal,
That acted from a principle of goodness,
From faithful love to thee——Live, and maintain
My innocence imbalm'd, with holiest care
Preserve my spotless memory!——I die——
ETERNAL MERCY, take my trembling soul!
Oh! 'tis the only sting of death, to part
From those we love—from thee——farewell, my *Tan-*
cred. [Dies.

Tancred. Thus then!

[Flying to his sword, is held by Rodolpho.

Rod. Hold! hold! my lord!——Have you forgot
Your *Sigismunda*'s last request already?

Tancred. Off! set me free! Think not to bind
me down,

With barbarous friendship, to the rack of life!
What hand can shut the thousand thousand gates,
Which death still opens to the woes of mortals?——
I shall find means——No power in earth or heaven
Can force me to endure the hateful light,
Thus robb'd of all that lent it joy and sweetness!
Off! traitors! off! or my distracted soul
Will burst indignant from this jail of nature,
To where she beckons yonder——No, mild seraph!
Point not to life——I cannot linger here,

R 2

Cut

Cut off from thee, the miserable pity
 The scorn of human kind!—A trampled king!
 Who let his mean poor-hearted love, one moment,
 To coward prudence stoop; who made it not
 The first undoubting action of his reign,
 To snatch thee to his throne, and there to shield thee,
 Thy helpless bosom from a ruffian's fury!—
 O shame! O agony! O the fell stings
 Of late, of vain repentance!—Ha! my brain
 Is all on fire! a wild abyss of thought!
 Th' infernal world discloses! See! behold him!
 Lo! with fierce smiles he shakes the bloody steel,
 And mocks my feeble tears!—Hence! quickly,
 hence!

Spurn his vile carcass! give it to the dogs!
 Expose it to the winds and screaming ravens!
 Or hurl it down that fiery steep to hell,
 There with his soul to toss in flames for ever!—
 Ah impotence of rage!—What am I? Where?
 Sad, silent all?—The forms of dumb despair,
 Around some mournful tomb!—What do I see?
 This soft abode of innocence and love
 Turn'd to the house of death! a place of horror!—
 Ah! that poor corse! pale! pale! deform'd with
 murder!

Is that my *Sigismunda*!

[*Throwing himself down by her.*

Siff. (*After a pathetic pause, looking on the scene
 before him*)

Have I liv'd

To these enfeebled years, by Heaven reserv'd,
 To be a dreadful monument of justice?—
Rodolpho, raise the king, and bear him hence

From

From this distracting scene of blood and death.
 Alas ! I dare not give him my assistance ;
 My care would only more enflame his rage.
 Behold the fatal work of my dark hand,
 That by rude force the passions would command,
 That ruthless sought to root them from the breast ;
 They may be rul'd, but will not be oppress'd.
 Taught hence, ye parents, who from nature stray,
 And the great ties of social life betray ;
 Ne'er with your children act a tyrant's part :
 'Tis yours to guide, not violate the heart :
 Ye vainly wise, who o'er mankind preside,
 Behold my righteous woes, and drop your pride !
 Keep Virtue's simple path before your eyes,
 Nor think from evil good can ever rise.

The End of the Fifth Act.

EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Miss BUDGE'LL.

*C*Ramm'd to the throat with wholesome moral stuff,
Alas! poor audience! you have had enough.
Was ever hapless heroine of a play
In such a pitious plight as ours to-day?
Was ever woman so by love betray'd?
Match'd with two husbands, and yet—die a maid.
But bless me!—hold—What sounds are these I hear!—
I see the Tragic Muse herself appear.

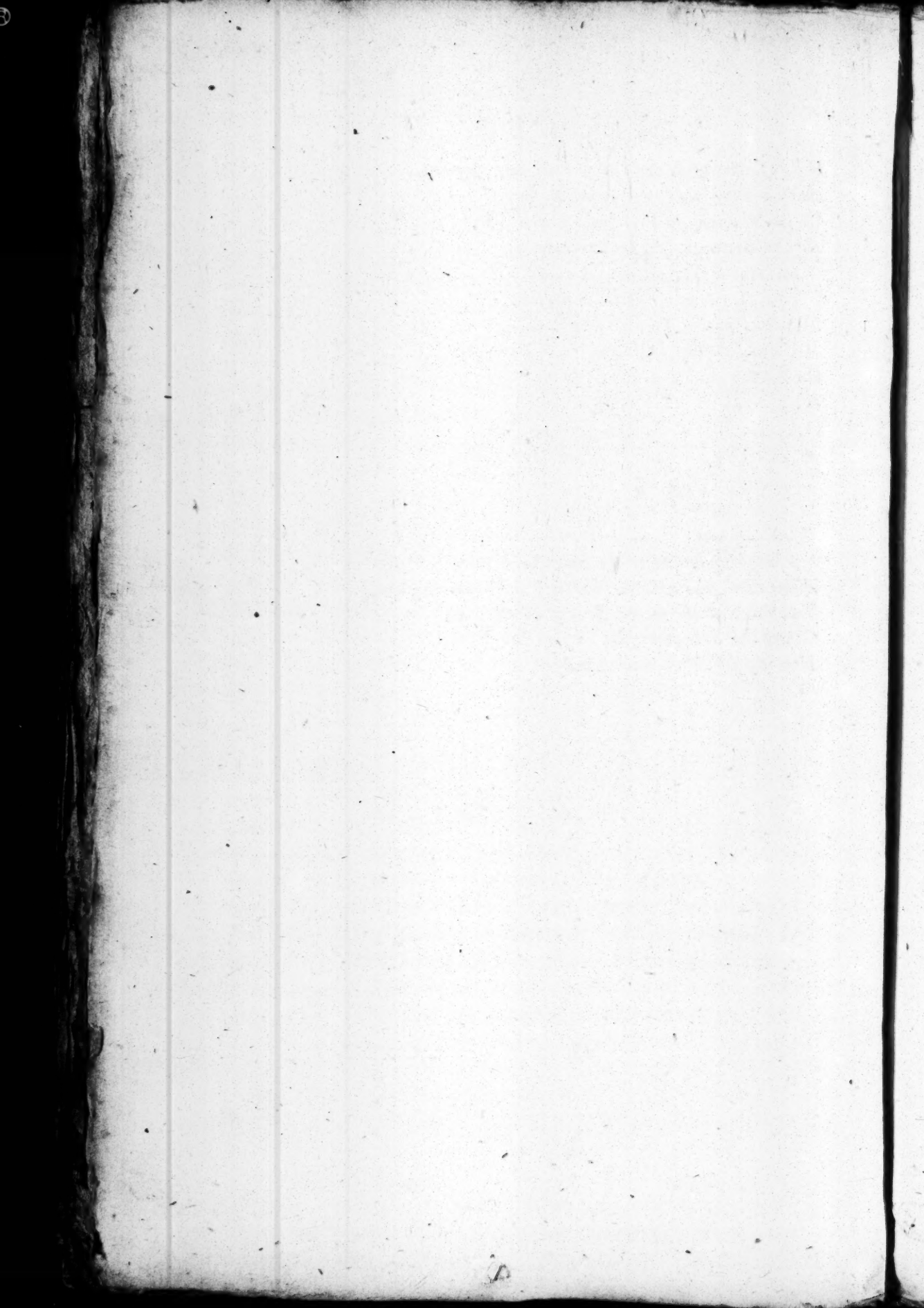
The back-scene opens, and discovers a romantic Sylvan landscape; from which Mrs. Cibber, in the character of the Tragic Muse, advances slowly to music, and speaks the following lines:

Hence with your flippant epilogue, that tries
To wipe the virtuous tear from British eyes;
That dares my moral, tragic scene profane,
With strains—at best, unsuiting, light and vain.
Hence from the pure unsully'd beams that play
In yon fair eyes where virtue shines—Away!
Britons, to you from chaste Castalian groves,
Where dwell the tender, oft unhappy loves;

Where

*Where shades of heroes roam, each mighty name,
And court my aid to rise again to fame;
To you I come, to Freedom's noblest seat,
And in Britannia fix my last retreat.*

*In Greece and Rome, I watch'd the public weal;
The purple tyrant trembled at my steel:
Nor did I less o'er private sorrows reign,
And mend the melting heart with softer pain.
On France and You then rose my bright'ning star,
With social ray—The Arts are ne'er at war.
O, as your fire and genius stronger blaze,
As yours are generous Freedom's bolder lays,
Let not the Gallic taste leave yours behind,
In decent manners and in life refin'd;
Banish the motly mode, to tag low verse,
The laughing ballad to the mournful hearse.
When thro' five acts your hearts have learnt to glow,
Touch'd with the sacred force of honest woe;
O keep the dear impression on your breast,
Nor idly lose it for a wretched jest.*



CORIOLANUS.

A

TRAGEDY.

R 5

PROLOGUE.

Written by

The Hon. GEORGE LYTTELTON.

Spoken by Mr. QUIN.

I Come not here your candour to implore
 For scenes, whose author is, alas! no more;
 He wants no advocate his cause to plead;
 You will yourselves be patrons of the dead.
 No party his benevolence confin'd,
 No sect—alike it flow'd to all mankind.
 He lov'd his friends (forgive this gushing tear:
 Alas! I feel I am no actor here).
 He lov'd his friends with such a warmth of heart,
 So clear of int'rest, so devoid of art,
 Such generous friendship, such unshaken zeal,
 No words can speak it, but our tears may tell.—
 O candid truth, O faith without a stain,
 O manners gently firm, and nobly plain,
 O sympathizing love of others bliss,
 Where will you find another breast like his?
 Such was the man—the poet well you know:
 Oft has he touch'd your hearts with tender woe:
 Oft in this crowded house, with just applause,
 You heard him touch fair Virtue's purest laws;

*For his chaste Muse employ'd her heav'n-taught lyre
None but the noblest passions to inspire;
Not one immoral, one corrupted thought,
One line, which dying he could wish to blot.
Oh, may to-night your favourable doom
Another laurel add, to grace his tomb:
Whilst he, superior now to praise or blame,
Hears not the feeble voice of human fame.
Yet if to those, whom most on earth he lov'd,
From whom his pious care is now remov'd,
With whom his liberal hand, and bounteous heart,
Shar'd all his little fortune could impart;
If to those friends your kind regard shall give
What they no longer can from him receive,
That, that, even now, above yon starry pole,
May touch with pleasure his immortal soul.*

The Persons represented.

CAIUS MARCIUS CORIOLANUS, Mr. *Quin.*
ATTIUS TULLUS, general of the }
 Volscian army, } Mr. *Ryan.*
GALESUS, one of the deputies of }
 the *Volscian* states attending the } Mr. *Delane.*
 camp, }
The other Deputies of the *Volscian*
 states.
VOLUSIUS, one of the principal }
 Volscian officers, } Mr. *Sparks.*
TITUS, freed-man of *Galesus*, Mr. *Ridout.*
MARCUS MINUCIUS, consul and }
 principal of the deputation from } Mr. *Bridgwater.*
 Rome to Coriolanus, }
POSTHUMUS COMINIUS, a consular }
 senator, one of the deputation, } Mr. *Anderson.*
 and who had been the *Roman* }
 general at the taking of *Corioli*, }

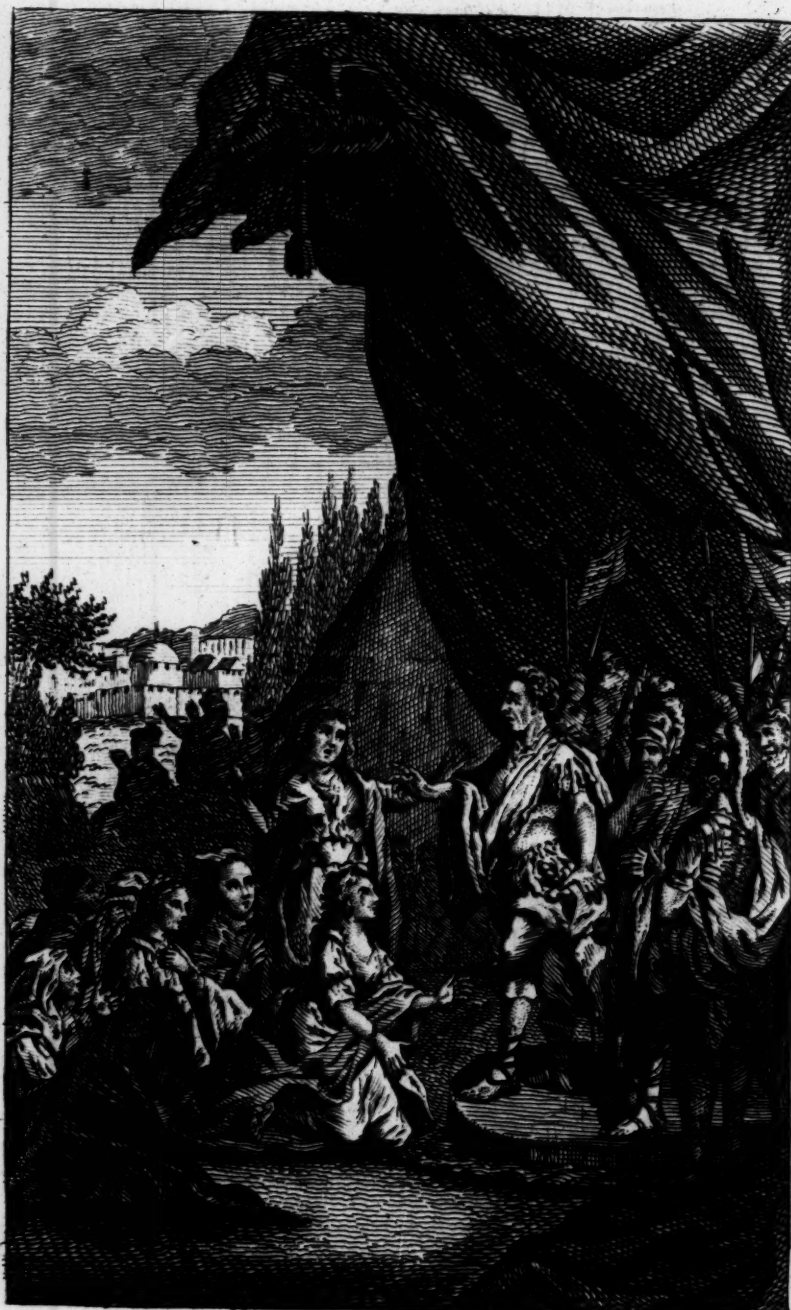
VETURIA, mother of *Coriolanus*, Mrs. *Woffington.*
VOLUMNIA, wife of *Coriolanus*, Miss *Bellamy.*

Roman Senators, Priests, Augurs, &c. of the first de-
putation. *Roman* Ladies in the train of *Veturia*
and *Volumnia*, of the second deputation.

Volscian OFFICERS, LICTORS, SOLDIERS, &c.

SCENE, *The Volscian Camp.*





Coriolanus.

at. Neft. Jo.

CORIOLANUS,

A

TRAGEDY.

ACT I. SCENE I.

The Volscian Camp.

ATTIUS TULLUS, VOLUSIUS.

Volus. **W**HENCE is it, *Tullus*, that our arms
are stopt

Here on the borders of the *Roman* state?
Why sleeps that spirit, whose heroic ardor
Urg'd you to break the truce, and pour'd our host,
From all th' united cantons of the *Volsci*,
On their unguarded frontier? Such designs
Brook not an hour's delay; their whole success
Depends on instant vigorous execution.

Tul. Volusius, I approve thy brave impatience;
And will to thee, in confidence of friendship,
Disclose my secret soul. Thou know'st *Gaius*,
Whose freedom *Caius Marcius*, once his guest,

2

Of

Of all the spoil of sack'd *Corioli*,
 Alone demanded; and who thence to *Rome*,
 From gratitude and friendship, followed *Marcus*;
 Whence lately to our *Antium* he return'd,
 With overtures of peace propos'd by *Rome*.

Voluf. I know him well; an antiquated sage
 Of that romantic school *Pythagoras*
 Establish'd here on our *Hesperian* shore;
 Whose gentle dictates only serve to tame
 Enfeebled mortals into slaves.

Tul. Galesus,
 Doubtless, possesses many civil virtues;
 Is gentle, good; for rectitude of heart,
 And innocence of life, by all rever'd.

Voluf. Pardon me, *Tullus*, if my faithful bluntness
 Deems you too liberal in his praise. In peace
 Such may perhaps do well, when prating rules
 An idle world; but in tempestuous times
 They are stark naught, these visionary statesmen,
 Fit rulers only for their golden age.
 The rugged genius of rapacious *Rome*
 For other men, and other counsels, calls.

Tul. Your thoughts are mine—I only meant to
 tell thee

The part he bears in this ill-tim'd delay.

Soon as our gather'd army march'd from *Antium*,
 The *Roman* senate, whose attentive caution
 Watch'd all our motions, took at once th' alarm;
 And sent a herald, ere we pass'd their borders,
 With formal ceremony, to demand
 The cause of our approach.—Had I been master,
 I would have answer'd at the gates of *Rome*.

But

But this *Galesus*, who attends our camp
Among the *Volscian* deputies, so pleaded
The laws of nations, made such loud complaints
Against th' infraction of the public faith,
So teaz'd us with the pedantry of states,
That I was forc'd, unwilling, to permit
His freedman *Titus*, to be sent to *Rome*
With our demands. If these the senate grants,
We then are in the toils of peace entangled,
In spite of all my efforts to avoid them.

Voluf. O, 'tis a wild chimera! Peace with *Rome*!
Dream not of that, unless the *Volscian* courage
Is quite subdued, and only seeks to gild
A vile submission with that specious name.
Learn wisdom from your neighbours. Peace with *Rome*
Has quell'd the *Latines*, tam'd their free-born spirit,
And by her friendship honour'd them with chains.

Tul. She ne'er will grant it on the just conditions
I now have brought the *Volsci* to demand;
The restitution of our conquer'd cities,
And fair alliance upon equal terms.
I know the *Roman* insolence will scorn
To yield to this: and *Titus* must return,
Within three days, the longest term allow'd him;
Of which the third is near elaps'd already.
Then ev'n *Galesus* will not dare to stop us
With superstitious forms, and solemn trifles,
From letting loose th' unbridled rage of war
Against those hated tyrants of *Hesperia*.

Voluf. Thanks to the gods! my sword will then be
free:

Then, poor *Corioli*! thy bleeding wounds,
Thy treasures sack'd, thy captive matrons,
Shall amply be reveng'd by thy *Volufius*:

Then,

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Then, *Tullus*, from the lofty brows of *Marcus*
Thou may'st regain the wreaths his conquering hand,
By partial fortune aided, tore from thine.

Tul. O my *Volusus*! thou, who art a soldier,
A try'd and brave one too, say, in thy heart
Dost thou not scorn me? thou, who saw'st me bend
Beneath the half-spent thunder of a foe,
Warm from the conquest of *Corioli*,
Which, rushing furious in with those, whose sally
He had repell'd, he seiz'd almost alone;
And gave to fire and sword. Yet thence he flew,
Scorning the plunder of our richest city,
His wounds undrest, without a moment's respite,
To where our armies on the fearful edge
Of battle stood; and, asking of the consul
To be oppos'd to me, with mighty rage,
Resistless, bore us down.

Volus. True valour, *Tullus*,
Lies in the mind, the never-yielding purpose,
Nor owns the blind award of giddy Fortune.

Tul. My soul, my friend, my soul is all on fire!
Thirst of revenge consumes me! the revenge
Of generous emulation, not of hatred.
This happy *Roman*, this proud *Marcus* haunts me.
Each troubled night, when slaves and captives sleep,
Forgetful of their chains, I, in my dreams,
Anew am vanquish'd; and, beneath the sword
With horror sinking, feel a tenfold death,
The death of honour. But I will redeem—
Yes, *Marcus*, I will yet redeem my fame.
To face thee once again is the great purpose
For which alone I live—Till then how slow,
How tedious lags the time! while shame corrodes me,
With many a bitter thought; and injur'd honour,
Sick

Sick and desponding, preys upon itself.

Volus. It fast approaches now, the hour of vengeance,

To this fam'd land, to ancient *Latium* due.
Unbalanc'd *Rome*, at variance with herself,
To order lost, in deep and hot commotion,
Stands on the dangerous point of civil war;
Her haughty nobles, and seditious commons,
Reviling, fearing, hating one another:
While, on our part, all wears a prosperous face;
Our troops united, numerous, high in spirit,
As if their general's soul inform'd them all.
O long-expected day!

Tul. Go, brave *Volustus*,

Go breathe thy ardor into every breast,
That, when the *Volscian* envoy shall return,
Whom ere the close of evening I expect,
One spirit may unite us in the cause
Of generous freedom, and our native rights,
So long oppress'd by *Rome's* encroaching power.

S C E N E II.

TULLUS alone.

Gaius said, that *Marcus* stands for consul.
O favour thou his suit, propitious *Jove*!
That I may brave him at his army's head,
In all the majesty of sovereign power!
That the whole conduct of the war may rest
On us alone, and prove by its decision,
Which of the two is worthiest to command——

S C E N E

SCENE III.

TULLUS, OFFICER.

Tul. Ha! why this haste! you look alarm'd.

Off. My lord,
One of exalted port, his visage hid,
Has plac'd himself upon your sacred hearth,
Beneath the dread protection of your *Lares*;
And sits majestic there in solemn silence.

Tul. Did you not ask him who, and what, he was?

Off. My lord, I could not speak; I felt appall'd,
As if the presence of some God had struck me.

Tul. Come, dastard! let me find this man of
terrors.

SCENE IV.

*The back-scene opens, and discovers CORIOLANUS as
described above.*

CORIOLANUS, TULLUS.

Tul. [*after some silence.*] Illustrious stranger—for thy
high demeanour
Bespeaks thee such—who art thou?

Corio. [*Rising and unmuffling his face.*] View me,
Tullus— [*After some pause.*]
Dost thou not know me?

Tul. No. That noble front
I never saw before. What is thy name?

Corio. Does not the secret voice of hostile instinct,
Does

Does not thy swelling heart declare me to thee?

Tul. Gods! can it be?—

Corio. Yes. I am *Caius Marcius*;
Known to thy smarting country by the name
Of *Coriolanus*. That alone is left me,
That empty name, for all my toils, my service,
The blood which I have shed for thankless *Rome*.
Behold me banish'd thence, a victim yielded
By her weak nobles to the maddening rabble.
I seek revenge. Thou may'st employ my sword,
With keener edge, with heavier force against her,
Than e'er it fell upon the *Volscian* nation.
But if thou, *Tullus*, dost refuse me this,
The only wish of my collected heart,
Where every passion in one burning point
Concenters, give me death: Death from thy hand
I sure have well deserv'd—Nor shall I blush
To take or life or death from *Attius Tullus*.

Tul. O *Caius Marcius*! in this one short moment,
That we have friendly talk'd, my ravish'd heart
Has undergone a great, a wondrous change.
I ever held thee in my best esteem;
But this heroic confidence has won me,
Stamp't me at once thy friend. I were indeed
A wretch as mean as this thy trust is noble,
Could I refuse thee thy demand—Yes, *Marcus*!
Thou hast thy wish! take half of my command,
If that be not enough, then take the whole.
We have, my friend, a gallant force on foot,
An army, *Marcus*, fit to follow thee.
Go lead them on, and take thy full revenge.
All should unite to punish the ungrateful:
Ingratitude is treason to mankind.

Corio. [*embracing him.*] Thus, generous *Tullus*, take
a soldier's thanks,

Who

Who is not practis'd in the gloss of words—
 Thou friend in deed! friend to my cause, my quarrel!
 Friend to the darling passion of my soul!
 All else I set at nought!—Immortal gods!
 I am new-made, and wonder at myself!
 A little while ago, and I was nothing;
 A powerless reptile, crawling on the earth,
 Curs'd with a soul that restless wish'd to wield
 The bolts of *Jove*! I dwelt in *Erebus*,
 I wander'd thro' the hopeless gloom of hell,
 Stung with revenge, tormented by the furies!
 Now, *Tullus*, like a god, you draw me thence,
 Throne me amidst the skies, with tempest charg'd,
 And put the ready thunder in my hand!

Tul. What I have promis'd, *Marcus*, I will do.
 Within an hour at farthest we expect
 The freeman of *Galesus* back from *Rome*,
 Who carried to the senate our demands.
 Their answer will, I doubt not, end the truce,
 And instant draw our angry swords against them.
 Till then retire within my inmost tent,
 Unknown to all but me, that when our chiefs
 Meet in full council to declare for war,
 I may produce thee to their wondering eyes,
 As if descended from avenging Heaven
 To humble lofty *Rome*, and teach her justice.

Corio. To thy direction, *Tullus*, I resign
 My future life: my fate is in thy hands;
 And, if I judge aright, the fate of *Rome*.

The End of the First Act.

A C T

ACT II. SCENE I.

GALESUS, TITUS,

Gal. **I**NDEED! my *Titus*, I had hopes that *Rome*,
 Vext as she is with her domestic broils,
 Her frontier weak, her armies unprepar'd,
 Might have comply'd with our demands, and give us
 The same alliance granted to the *Latines*.

Titus. The senate scarce would hear the terms I
 offer'd;

But order'd me to bear this answer back;

“ If first the *Volsci* take up arms, the *Romans*

“ Will be the last to lay them down.”

Gal. Alas!

This answer seals the doom of many a wretch.

Unchain'd *Bellona* from her temple rushes,

With all the crimes and vices in her train.

Earth fades at her approach. To rural peace,

Fair plenty, and the social joy of cities,

Soon will succeed rage, rapine, devastation,

Each cruel horror sanctify'd by names.

O mortals! mortals! when will you, content

With Nature's bounty, that in fuller flow,

Still as your labours open more its sources,

Abundant gushes o'er the happy world;

When will you banish violence, and outrage,

To dwell with beasts of prey in woods and deserts?

Titus. Never till *Rome* shall change her conquering
 maxims.

Gal. Her haughty spirit now will soar beyond

Its

384 CORIOLANUS.

Its usual pitch, upborne by *Caius Marcius*.
Stands he not for the consulate?

Titus. He did.

But is no more a citizen of *Rome*.

Gal. What mean'st thou, *Titus*?

Titus. *Marcius* is from *Rome*

Banish'd for ever.

Gal. O immortal Powers!

On what pretence could they to exile doom
Their wisest captain, and their bravest soldier?
Nor less renown'd for piety, for justice,
An uncorrupted heart, and purest manners?

Titus. The charge against him was entirely ground-
less,

What not his enemies themselves believe'd,
Affecting of tyrannic power in *Rome*.
His real crime was only some hot words,
Struck from his fiery temper, in the senate,
Against those factious ministers of discord,
The tribunes of the people. They to rage,
And frantic fury, rous'd the mad plebeians,
By whom supported in their bold attempt,
They durst presume to summon to the bar
Of an enrag'd and partial populace,
The most illustrious senator of *Rome*.
To this the nobles yielded—and, with his,
Gave up their own and childrens rights for ever.

Gal. O shameful weakness in a *Roman* senate,
So much renown'd for firmness! yet, my *Titus*,
Spite of my love to *Marcius*, I must own it,
The vigorous foil whence his heroic virtues
Luxuriant rise, if not with careful hand
Severely weeded, teems with imperfections.
His lofty spirit brooks no opposition.

His

His rage, if once offended, knows no bounds.
He deems plebeians, with patrician blood
Compar'd, the creatures of a lower species,
Mere mental hands by Nature meant to serve him.

Titus. It was this high patrician pride undid him.
The furious people triumph'd in his ruin,
As if they had expell'd another *Tarquin* :
While, like a captive train, the vanquish'd nobles
Hung their dejected heads in silent shame.
Marcus alone seem'd unconcern'd ; tho' deep
The latent tempest boil'd within his breast,
Choak'd up and smother'd with excessive rage.

Gal. You were his guest at *Rome*, and therefore,

Titus,

Might on this sad occasion be permitted
To join your tears with his domestic friends.
Saw you that moving scene ?

Titus. I did, *Galesus.*

I follow'd *Marcus* home—His mother, there,
Veturia, the most venerable matron
These eyes have e'er beheld, and soft *Volumnia*,
His lovely virtuous wife amidst his children,
Spread on the ground, lay lost in dumb despair.
He swelling stood a while, and could not speak,
Th' affronted hero struggling with the man ;
Then thus at last he broke the gloomy silence ;
" 'Tis done. The guilty sentence is pronounc'd.
" Ungrateful *Rome* has cast me from her bosom.
" Support this blow with fortitude and courage,
" As it becomes two generous *Roman* matrons.
" I recommend my children to your care.
" Farewell. I go, I quit, without regret,
" A city grown an enemy to virtue."

Gal. Oh godlike *Marcus* ! oh unconquer'd strength

VOL. II.

S

And

And dignity of mind! How much superior
Is such a soul to all the power of Fortune!

Titus. This said, he sternly try'd to break away:
When, holding in his hand his eldest son,
Vituria follow'd; while the poor *Volumnia*,
All drown'd in tears, and bearing in one arm
Their youngest, yet an infant, with the other
Hung clinging at his knees—he, turning to them,
Half soften'd, half severe, breath'd from his soul
These broken accents—"Cease your vain complaints,
"Mother, you have no more a son; and thou,
"Thou best of women! thou, my dear *Volumnia*!
"No more a husband."—Pierc'd with these dire words
Volumnia lifeless sunk: and off he flung,
With wild precipitation.

Gal. Thy sad tale

Blinds my old eyes with tears—But whither, tell me,
O whither, *Titus*, bent he then his course?

Titus. Where the blind genius of regardless rage
And desperation led. On to the gate
Capena call'd, attended by the nobles,
He stalk'd in sullen majesty along;
Nor deign'd a word. A godlike virtuous anger
Beam'd through his features, and sublim'd his air.
With downcast eyes he walk'd; or, if aside
He chanc'd to look, each look was great reproach.
Thus in emphatic silence, that made words
Void and insipid all, he parted from them,
The day preceding my return from *Rome*;
Nor has been heard of since, lost in th' abyss
Of his own woes.

Gal. O *Marcus*, noble *Marcus*!

How shall my friendship succour thy distress?
Where shall I find thee, to partake thy sorrows,

And

And make myself companion of thy exile?
 But, *Titus*, we indulge discourse too long—
 Go, and assemble thou the *Volscian* chiefs,
 Whilst I repair to *Tullus*, to inform,
 And bring him to the council, there to hear
 The fatal answer thou hast brought from *Rome*.

S C E N E II.

Changes to TULLUS's Tent.

CORIOLANUS, TULLUS.

Corio. Forgive me, *Tullus*, if I count the moments
 That stop the purpose of thy noble kindness,
 And keep me here confin'd in tame inaction.
 Why lingers *Titus*?

Tul. Calm thy restless heart,
 Brave *Marcus*; every minute I expect him.
 Soon from the cloud that hides thee, shalt thou break
 With double brightness; soon thy fiery rage
 Shall wither all the strength and pride of *Rome*.

Corio. O righteous *Jove*, protector of the injur'd!
 If from my earliest youth, with pious awe,
 I still have reverenc'd thy all-powerful justice,
 Still by her sacred dictates rul'd my actions;
 O let that justice now support my cause,
 And arm my strong right-hand with all her terrors!
 When that is done, be life or death my lot,
 As thy almighty pleasure shall determine.

[Enter an Officer to Tullus.]

Off. My lord, *Gaius* asks admittance to you.

Tul. *Marcus*, retire an instant, till I hear

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The business brings him hither—Bid him enter.

[*Exeunt Officer and Coriolanus.*]

[*Enter Galesus.*]

SCENE III.

TULLUS, GALESUS.

Gal. *Tullus*, the Roman senate has return'd
No other answer to our late demands,
But absolute denial and defiance.

Tul. It is what I expected—We shall teach them
An humbler language soon—Hast thou assembled,
As I desir'd, the *Volscian* chiefs in council?

Gal. *Titus* is gone to summon their attendance.

Tul. It is enough—Come forth, my noble guest!
And shew *Galesus* how the gods assist us.

SCENE IV.

CORIOLANUS, TULLUS, GALESUS.

Gal. O my astonish'd soul; what do I see!
What! *Caius Marcius*! *Caius Marcius* here,
Beneath one tent with *Tullus*?

Tul. Ay, and more,
With *Tullus*, now his friend and fellow-foldier.
Yes, thou shalt see him thundering at the head
Of *Volscian* armies, he, who oft has carry'd
Destruction thro' their ranks—Your leave a moment,
While to our chiefs, and fathers, I announce
Their unexpected guest.

SCENE

SCENE V.

CORIOLANUS, GALEBUS.

Corio. Thou good old man!
 Close let me strain thee to my faithful heart,
 Which now is doubly thine, united more
 By the protection which thy country gives me,
 Than by our former friendship.

Gal. Strange event!
 This is thy work, almighty Providence!
 Whose power, beyond the stretch of human thought,
 Revolves the orbs of empire; bids them sink
 Deep in the deadning night of thy displeasure,
 Or rise majestic o'er a wondering world.
 The gods by thee—I see it, *Coriolanus*,—
 Mean to exalt us, and depress the *Romans*.

Corio. *Galebus*, yes, the gods have sent me hither;
 Those righteous gods, who, when vindictive justice
 Excites them to destroy a worthless people,
 Make their own crimes and follies strike the blow.

Gal. Cherish these thoughts, that teach us what
 we are,
 And tame the pride of man. There is a power
 Unseen that rules th' illimitable world,
 That guides its motions, from the brightest star,
 To the least dust of this sin-tainted mold;
 While man, who madly deems himself the lord
 Of all, is nought but weakness and dependance.
 This sacred truth, by sure experience taught,
 Thou must have learnt, when, wandering all alone,
 Each bird, each insect, flitting thro' the sky,
 Was more sufficient for itself, than thou——

Ah, the full image of thy woes dissolves me!
 The pangs that must have torn, at parting from thee,
 Thy mother and thy wife. I cannot think
 Of that sad scene, without some drops of pity!

Corio. Who was it forc'd me to that bitter parting?
 Who, in one cruel, hasty moment, chas'd me
 From wife, from children, friends, and household gods,
 Me! who so often had protect'd theirs?
 Who from the sacred city of my fathers
 Drove me, with Nature's commoners to dwell,
 To lodge beneath their wide unshelter'd roof,
 And at their table feed? O blast me, gods!
 With ev'ry woe! debility of mind,
 Dishonour, just contempt, and palsy'd weakness,
 If I forgive the villains! yes, *Galesus*,
 Yes, I will offer to the Powers of vengeance
 A great, a glorious victim—a whole city!—
 Why, *Tullus*, this delay?

Gal. May *Coriolanus*
 Be to the *Volsian* nation, and himself,
 The dread, the godlike instrument of justice!
 But let not rage and vengeance mix their rancour;
 Let them not trouble with their fretful storm,
 Their angry gleams, that azure, where enthron'd
 The calm divinity of Justice sits,
 And pities, while she punishes, mankind.

Corio. What saidst thou? What, against the Powers
 of vengeance?
 The gods gave honest Anger, just Revenge,
 To be the awful guardians of the rights
 And native dignity of human kind.
 O, were it not for them, the saucy world
 Would grow a noisome nest of little tyrants!

Each

Each carrion crow, on eagle merit perch'd,
 Would peck his eyes out, and the mungril cur
 At pleasure bait the lion—No, *Galesus*,
 I would not rashly, nor on light occasion,
 Receive the deep impressiion in my breast;
 But when the base, the brutal, and unjust,
 Or, worse than all, th' ungrateful, stamp it there;
 O I will then, with luxury supreme,
 Enjoy the pleasure of offended gods,
 A righteous, just revenge!—Behold my foul.

[*Enter an Officer.*]

Off. My lords, th' assembled chiefs desire your presence.

Gal. Come, noble *Marcus*; let my joyful hand
 Conduct thee thither—Doubt not, thy reception
 Will be proportion'd to thy fame and merit.

SCENE VI.

The back-scene opens, and discovers the deputies of the Volscian States, assembled in council. They rise and salute Coriolanus; then resume their places.

GALESUS, TULLUS, CORIOLANUS, Senators.

Gal. Assembled states, and captains of the *Volsci*,
 Behold the chief so much renown'd in war;
 Our once so formidable foe, but now
 Our proffer'd friend and soldier—*Caius Marcus*.

1st Sena. We give him hearty welcome from our souls.

Corio. Most noble chiefs, and fathers of the *Volsci*,
 I need not say, how, by the people's rage,

And the poor weakness of the timid nobles,
 I am expell'd from *Rome*. Had I confin'd
 My wishes merely to a safe retreat,
 Some *Latine* city might have given me that ;
 Or any nameless corner. What imports it,
 Where a tame patient exile rots in silence ?
 But, *Volscian* lords, permit me to declare,
 I would at once cut short my useless days,
 Rather than be that despicable wretch,
 Who neither can take vengeance on his foes,
 Nor serve his friends. That is my temper, chiefs.
 I shall be glad to merit, by my sword,
 Th' asylum which I seek among the *Volsci*.
Rome is our common-foe : Then let us join
 Our common sufferings, passions, and resentments.
 Yes, tho' but one, I bring so many wrongs,
 So large a share of powerful enmity,
 Into the war, as gives me the presumption,
 To offer to the *Volscian* states th' alliance
 Even of my single arm.—

Tul. That single arm
 Is in itself a numerous army, *Marcus* ;
 The *Volscians* so esteem it—But proceed.

Corio. I will not mention, *Volscian* chiefs, what
 talent

The world allows me to possess in war :
 But, be that what it will, you may employ it.
 Soldier, or captain, in whatever station
 You place me, I will lose each drop of blood,
 Or with this hand I'll fix the *Volscian* standard
 On the proud towers of capitolian *Jove*.

Tul. Chiefs of the *Volscian* league, I give you joy
 Of our new citizen, the noble *Marcus*.
 The genius of the *Volscian* state has sent him,

Whetted

Whetted by wrongs into a keener hatred
 Than that we bear to *Rome*. It were contemning,
 With impious self-sufficient arrogance
 This bounty of the gods, not to accept,
 With every mark of honour, of his service.
I, Volscians, I, even Attius Tullus, give,
 First of you all, my voice, that *Caius Marcius*
 Be now receiv'd to high command among us ;
 That instantly we do appoint him general
 Of half our troops, which here, with your consent,
 I to him yield.—Speak, chiefs, is this your pleasure ?
ist Sena. It is, — We give unanimous consent.
Tul. [embracing him.] Marcius, I joy to call thee
my companion,
 And colleague in this war.

Corio. By all the gods !
 Thou art the generous victor of my soul !
 Yes, *Tullus*, I am conquer'd by thy virtue.
Gal. Tho' I have oft, on great occasions, *Tullus*,
 Beheld thee in the senate, and the field,
 Cover'd with glory ; yet, I must avow,
 I never saw thee shew such genuine greatness,
 Such true sublimity of soul, as now.
 To scorn th' all-powerful charm of selfish passions,
 Chiefly the dazzling pride of emulation,
 That noble weakness of heroic minds,
 To sink thyself that thou may'st raise thy country,
 To put the sword into thy rival's hand,
 And twine thy promis'd laurels round his brow——
 O 'tis a flight beyond the highest point
 Of martial glory ! and what few can reach.
 Go forth, ye chosen ministers of justice ;
 And may that awful Power, whose secret hand
 Sways all our passions, turns our partial views,

394 CORIOLANUS.

All to its own dread purposes, attend you !

Corio. I burn to enter on the glorious task
You now have mark'd me out. How slow the time
To the warm soul, that, in the very instant
It forms, would execute, a great design !
'Tis my advice we march direct to *Rome* ;
We cannot be too quick. Let the first dawn
See us in bright array before her walls.
Perhaps when they behold their exile there,
Back'd by your force, some conscious hearts among
them

May feel th' alarm of guilt.

Tul. I much approve
Of this advice. 'Tis what I thought before,
Ere strengthen'd, *Marcus*, by thy mighty arm.
But now 'tis doubly right. Here, *Volsian* chiefs,
Here let our council terminate—The troops
Have had repose sufficient. Strait to *Rome*,
Come, let us urge our march—As yet the stars
Ride in their middle watch ; we shall with ease,
Reach it by dawn——

Corio. Yes, we have time—too much !
Six tedious hours till morn—But hence ! away !
My soul on fire anticipates the dawn.

The End of the Second Act.

ACT

ACT III. SCENE I.

CORIOLANUS, TULLUS, VOLUSIUS, TITUS, *with a crowd of Volscian officers. Acclamation behind the scenes.*

Corio. **N**O more—I merit not this lavish praise.
True, we have driven the *Roman* legions
back,

Defeated, and disgrac'd—But what is this?
Nothing, ye *Volsci*, nothing yet is done.
We but begin the wondrous leaf of story,
That marks the *Roman* doom. At length it dawns,
The destin'd hour, that eases of their fears
The nations round, and sets *Hesperia* free.
Come on, my brave companions of the war!
Come, let us finish at one mighty stroke
This toil of labouring fate.—We will, or perish!
While, noble *Tullus*, you protect the camp,
I, with my troops, all men of chosen valour,
And well-approv'd to-day, will storm the city.

Titus. Beneath thy animating conduct, *Marcus*,
What can the *Volscian* valour not perform?
Thy very sight and voice subdues the *Romans*.
When, lifting up your helm, you shew'd your face,
That like a comet glar'd destruction on them,
I saw their bravest veterans fly before thee.
Their ancient spirit has with thee forsook them,
And ruin hangs o'er yon devoted walls.

[Enter an Officer, who addresses himself to
Coriolanus.

S 6

Off.

396 CORIOLANUS.

Offi. My lord, a herald is arriv'd from *Rome*,
To say, a deputation from the senate,
Attended by the ministers of Heaven,
A venerable train of priests and flamens,
Is on the way, address'd to you.

Corio. To me!
What can this message mean!—Stand to your arms,
Ye *Volscian* troops; and let these *Romans* pass
Betwixt the lowering frown of double files.
What! do they think me such a milky boy,
To pay my vengeance with a few soft words!
Come, fellow soldiers, *Tullus*, come, and see,
If I betray the honours you have done me.

[*Goes out with a train of Volscian officers.*]

S C E N E II.

TULLUS, VOLUSIUS, *who remain.*

Vol. [*after some silence.*] Are we not, *Tullus*, failing
in our duty
Not to attend our general?

Tul. How! what said'st thou?

Vol. Methought, my lord, his parting orders were,
We should attend the triumph now preparing
O'er all his foes at once—*Romans* and *Volsci*!
Come, we shall give offence.

Tul. Of this no more.
I pray thee spare thy bitter irony.

Vol. Shall I then speak without disguise?

Tul. Speak out
With all the honest bluntness of a friend.

Think'st

Think'st thou I fear the truth ?

Vol. Then, *Tullus*, know,
Thou art no more the general of the *Volsci*.
Thou hast, by this thy generous weakness, sunk
Thyself into a private man of *Antium*.
Yes, thou hast taken from thy laurel'd brow
The well-earn'd trophies of thy toils and perils,
Thy springing hopes, the fairest ever budded,
And heap'd them on a man too proud before.

Tul. He bears it high.

Vol. Death and perdition ! high !
With uncontroll'd command !—You see, already,
He will not be encumber'd with the fetters
Of our advice. He speaks his sovereign will ;
On every hand he issues out his orders,
As to his natural slaves.—For you, my lord,
He has, I think, confin'd you to your camp,
There in inglorious indolence to languish ;
While he, beneath your blasted eyes, shall reap
The harvest of your honour.

Tul. No, *Volusius*,
Whatever honour shall by him be gain'd
Reverts to me, from whose superior bounty
He drew the means of all his glorious deeds.
This mighty chief, this conqueror of *Rome*,
Is but my creature.—

Vol. Wretched self-delusion !
He and the *Volscians* know he is thy master.
He acts as such in all things.—Now, by *Mars*,
Could my abhorrent soul endure the thought
Of stooping to a *Roman* chief, I here
Would leave thee in thy solitary camp,
And go where glory calls.

Tul. Indeed, *Volusius*,
I did

I did expect more equal treatment from him.
 But what of that?—The generous pride of virtue
 Disdains to weigh too nicely the returns
 Her bounty meets with—Like the liberal gods,
 From her own gracious nature she bestows,
 Nor stoops to ask reward—Yet must I own,
 I thought he would not have so soon forgot
 What he so lately was, and what I am.

Vol. Gods! knew ye not his character before?
 Did you not know his genius was to yours
 Averse, as are antipathies in nature?
 High, over-weening, tyrannously proud,
 And only fit to hold command o'er slaves?
 Hence, as repugnant to that equal life,
 Which is the quickening soul of all republics,
 The *Roman* people cast him forth; and we,
 Shall we receive the bane of their repose,
 Into our breast? Are we less free than they?
 Or shall we be more patient of a tyrant?

Tul. All this I knew. But while his imperfections
 Are thy glad theme, thou hast forgot his virtues.

Vol. I leave that subject to the smooth *Galeus*,
 And these his *Volscian* flatterers—His virtues!
 Trust me there is no insolence that treads
 So high as that which rears itself on virtue.

Tul. Well, be it so—I meant, that even his vices
 Should, on this great occasion, serve the *Volsci*.

Vol. Confusion! there it is! there lurks the sting
 Of our dishonour! while this *Marcus* leads
 The *Roman* armies, ours are driven before him.
 Behold, he changes sides; when with him changes
 The fortune of the war. Strait they grow *Volsci*,
 And we victorious *Romans*—Such, no doubt,

Such

Such is his secret boast—Ay, this vile brand
 Success itself will fix for ever on us ;
 And, *Tullus*, thou, 'tis thou must answer for it.

Tul. [*aside.*] His words are daggers to my heart ;
 I feel

Their truth, but am ashamed to own my folly.

Vol. O shame ! O infamy ! the thought consumes me.
 It scalds my eyes with tears, to see a *Roman*
 Borne on our shoulders to immortal fame :
 Just in the happy moment that decided
 The long dispute of ages, that for which
 Our generous ancestors had toil'd and bled,
 To see him then step in and steal our glory !
 O that we first had perish'd all ! A people,
 Who cannot find in their own proper force
 Their own protection, are not worth the saving !

Tul. It must have way ! I will no more suppress it—

Know then, my rough old friend, no less than thee
 His conduct hurts me, and upbraids my folly.
 I wake as from a dream. What demon mov'd me ?
 What doating generosity ? his woes,
 Was it his woes ! To see the brave reduc'd
 To trust his mortal foe ? Perhaps, a little
 That work'd within my bosom—But, *Volusus*,
 That was not all—I will to thee confess
 The weakness of my heart—Yes, it was pride,
 The dazzling pride to see my rival-warrior
 The great *Coriolanus*, bend his soul,
 His haughty soul, to sue for my protection.
 Protection ! said I ? were it that alone,
 I had been base to have refus'd him that,
 To have refus'd him aught a gallant foe
 Owes to a gallant foe.—But to exalt him
 To the same level, nay, above myself ;

To

To yield him the command of half my troops,
The choicest acting half—That, that was madness!
Was weak, was mean, unworthy of a man!—

Vol. I scorn to flatter thee—It was indeed.

Tul. Curse on the slave *Gaius*! soothing, he
Seiz'd the fond moment of infatuation,
And clinch'd the chains my generous folly forg'd.
How shall I from this labyrinth escape?
Must it then be! what cruel genius dooms me,
In war or peace to creep beneath his fortune?

Vol. That genius is thyself. If thou canst bear
The very thought of stooping to this *Roman*,
Thou from that moment art his vassal, *Tullus*;
By that thou dost acknowledge, parent Nature
Has form'd him thy superior. But if fix'd
Upon the base of manly resolution,
Thou say'st—I will be free! I will command!
I and my country! then—O never doubt it—
We shall find means to crush this vain intruder;
Ev'n I myself—this hand—

Nay, hear me, *Tullus*,
'Tis not yet come to that, that last resource.
I do not say we should employ the dagger,
While other, better means are in our power.

Tul. No, my *Volusus*, Fortune will not drive us,
Or I am much deceiv'd, to that extreme:
We shall not want the strongest fairest plea,
To give a solemn sanction to his fate.
He will betray himself. Whate'er his rage
Of passion talks, a weakness for his country
Sicks in his soul, and he is still a *Roman*.
Soon shall we see him tempted to the brink
Of this sure precipice—Then down, at once,
Without remorse, we hurl him to perdition!

But

But hark! the trumpet calls us to a scene
I should detest, if not from hope we thence
May gather matter to mature our purpose,

SCENE III.

The back scene opens, and discovers Coriolanus sitting on his tribunal, attended by his licitors, and a croud of Volscian officers. Files of troops drawn up on either band. In the depth of the scene appear the deputies from the Roman senate, M. Minucius, Posthumus Cominius, Sp. Lartius, P. Pinnarius, and Q. Sulpitius, all consular senators, who had been his most zealous friends. And behind them march the priests, the sacrificers, the augurs, and the guardians of the sacred things, drest in their ceremonial habits. These advance slowly betwixt the files of soldiers, under arms. As Tullus enters, Coriolanus rising salutes him.

Corio. Here, noble Tullus, sit, and judge my conduct;

Nor spare to check me, if I act amiss.

Tul. Marcius, the Volscian fate is in thy hands.

[Coriolanus is seated again, and Tullus places himself upon a tribunal on his left hand. Mean time, the Roman deputies advance up to Coriolanus and salute him, which he returns.

Corio. What, Romans, from the generals of the
Volsci

Is your demand?

Minu. O Coriolanus, Rome,
Nurse of thy tender years, thy parent-city,
Her senators, her people, priests, and augurs,
Her

Her every order and degree, by us,
 The ever-zealous, still unshaken friends,
 Sue in the most pathetic terms for peace.
 And if in this constrain'd, we from our maxim,
 Never to ask but give it, must depart;
 It is some consolation, in the state
 To which thou hast by thy superior valour
 Reduc'd us, that we ask it from a *Roman*.

Corio. I was *Roman* once, and thought the name
 Was not dishonour'd by me; but it pleas'd
 Your lords, the mob of *Rome*, to take it from me;
 Nor will I now receive it back again.

Minu. The name thou may'st reject, but canst not
 throw.

The duties from thee which that name imports;
 Indissoluble duties, bound upon thee
 By the strong hand of Nature, and confirm'd
 By the dread sanction of all-ruling *Jove*.
 Then hear thy country's supplicating voice;
 By all those duties I conjure thee hear us.

Cario. Well—I will hear thee; speak, declare thy
 message.

Minu. Give peace, give healing peace, to two brave
 nations,

Fatigu'd with war, and sick of cruel deeds!
 To carry on destruction's easy trade,
 Afflict mankind, and scourge the world with war,
 Is what each wicked, each ambitious man,
 Who lets his furious passions loose, may do:
 But in the flattering torrent of success,
 To check his rage, and drop th' avenging sword,
 When a repenting people ask it of him,
 That is the genuine bounty of a god.

Then

Then urge no farther this your just resentment;
 Which, injur'd as you are, you needs must feel,
 But never ought to carry into action,
 Against your sacred country; whence you drew
 Your life, your virtues, every mortal good,
 That very valour you employ against her.
 Stop, *Coriolanus*, ere beyond retreat,
 You plunge yourself in crimes. To the fierce joy
 Of vengeance push'd to barbarous excess,
 Repentance will succeed, and sick'ning horror.
 Consider too the slippery state of fortune.
 The gods take pleasure oft, when haughty mortals
 On their own pride erect a mighty fabric,
 By slightest means to lay their towering schemes
 Low in the dust, and teach them they are nothing.
 Return, thou virtuous *Roman*! to the bosom
 Of thy imploring country. Lo! her arms
 She fondly spreads to take thee back again,
 And by redoubled love efface her harshness.
 Return, and crown thee with the noblest wreath
 Which glory can bestow—the palm of mercy!

Corio. *Marcus Minucius*, and ye other *Romans*,
 Respected senators, and holy flamens,
 Attend, and take to your demand this answer:

Why court you me, the servant of the *Volsi*?
 It is to them that you must bend for peace,
 Which on these only terms they will accord you.
 "Restore the conquer'd lands, your former wars
 "Have ravish'd from them: from their towns and
 "cities,
 "Won by your arms, withdraw your colonies;
 "And to the full immunities of *Rome*
 "Frankly admit them, as you have the *Latines*."

Then,

Then, *Romans*, ye have peace, and not till then!
 If these are terms which suit not your ambition,
 They suit the state to which the *Volscian* arms
 Have now reduc'd you—We have learn'd from *Rome*
 To use our fortune, and command the vanquish'd.

Tul. [*aside.*] Death to my hopes! I'm now his slave
 for ever.

Corio. [*addressing himself to the Volsci.*] This, my
 illustrious patrons and protectors,
Volsci, to you I ow'd. Permit me now
 To do myself and injur'd honour justice.

[*Turning again to the Romans.*]

As to the liberty you idly vaunt
 To give me of returning to your city,
 'Tis what I hold unworthy of acceptance.
 Can I return into th' ungrateful bosom
 Of a distracted state, where, to the rage
 Of a vile senseless populace, the laws
 Are by your shameful weakness given a prey?
 Who are the men that hold the sway among you?
 And whom have you expell'd, as ev'n unworthy
 To live within the cincture of your walls?—
 O the wild thought breaks in and troubles reason!—
 With what, ye *Romans*, can the fourest censor,
 The most envenom'd malice, justly charge me?
 Did I e'er break your laws? Nay, did I e'er
 Do aught that could disturb the sacred order,
 The peace and social harmony of life;
 Or taint your ancient sanctity of manners?
 What was my crime? I could not bear to see
 Your dignity debas'd, to see the rabble
 Tread on the reverend grey authority
 Of senatorial wisdom: Yes, for you,

In

In your defence I did enrage this monster ;
 And yet you basely left me to its fury.
 Then talk no more of services and friendship :
 A friend, who can, and does not shield, betrays me.
 Or if the power was wanting, then your senate
 Is sunk into servility and bondage,
 Nor should a freeman deign to sit among you.

Minu. The wisest are sometimes compell'd to yield
 To popular storms : yet I defend not, *Marcus*,
 Our timid conduct ; we have felt our error,
 And now invite thee back to aid the senate,
 With thy heroic spirit to restrain
 The giddy rage of faction, and to hold
 The reins of government more firm hereafter.

As to th' appeal which thou hast nobly made
 In vindication of thy spotless fame,
 With pleasure we confirm it, and bear witness
 To all thy public and thy private virtues :
 But let us also beg thee not to stain
 The brightness of that glory by a crime,
 Which, unrepented, would disgrace them all,
 A dire rebellious war against thy country.

Corio. Absurd ! what can you mean ? To call a
 people,
 Who with the last indignity have us'd me,
 To call my foes my country ! No, *Minucius*,
 It is the generous nation of the *Volsci*.
 These brave, these virtuous men, you see around me,
 Who, when I wander'd a poor helpless exile,
 Took pity of my injuries and woes ;
 Forgot the former mischiefs of my sword ;
 Heap'd on my kindness, honours, dignities ;
 Fear'd not to trust me with this high command,

And

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And plac'd me here the guardian of their cause:—
Be witness, *Jove!*—It is alone their nation
I henceforth will acknowledge for my country!
Let this suffice—You have my answer, *Romans.*

Comi. This answer, *Coriolanus*, is the dictate
More of thy pride than magnanimity:
'Tis thy revenge that gives it, not thy virtue.
Art thou above the gods? who joy to show'r
Their doubled goodness on repenting mortals?
But think not I intend, by this, to urge
Our proffer'd peace, so harshly treated, further.
That were a weakness ill becoming *Romans.*
Yet I must tell thee, it would better suit
A fierce despotic chief of barbarous slaves,
Than the calm dignity of one who sits
In the grave senate of a free republic,
To talk so high, and as it were to thrust
Plebeians from the native rights of man. —

Corio. Ha! dost thou come the people's advocate
To me, *Cominius!* com'st thou to insult me!

Comi. Nay, hear me, *Marcus*:—These grey hairs
impower me
To set thee right before this great assembly:
And there was once a time, thou would'st have heard
Thy general with more deference and patience—
I tell thee then, whoe'er amidst the sons
Of reason, valour, liberty, and virtue,
Displays distinguish'd merit, is a noble
Of Nature's own creating. Such have risen,
Sprung from the dust; or where had been our honours?
And such in radiant bands will rise again,
In yon immortal city, that, when most
Depress'd by fate, and near apparent ruin,

Returns,

Returns, as with an energy divine,
On her astonish'd foes, and shakes them from her—
Your pardon, *Volsci*—But this, *Coriolanus*,
Is what I had to say.

Corio. And I have heard it—

[*Rising from his tribunal; and the priests advancing to address him, he prevents them.*]

For you, ye awful ministers of Heaven,
Let me not hear your holy lips profan'd
By urging what my duty must refuse.
I bow in adoration to the gods;
I venerate their servants. But there is,
There is a power, their chief, their darling care,
The guardian of mankind, which to betray
Were violating all—And that is Justice.

So far my public character demands;
So far my honour.—Now, what should forbid
The man, and friend, to be indulg'd a little?

Permit me to embrace thee, good *Minucius*,
Thee, *Lartius*; you, *Pinnarius* and *Sulpitius*:
But chiefly thee, *Cominius*, who first rais'd me
To deeds of arms: who from thy consular brow
Took thy own crown, and with it circled mine.
Though nought can shake my purpose, yet I wish
That *Rome* had sent me others on this errand.
I thank you for your friendship. The protection,
Which you have given to those, whom once I call'd
By tender names, I would not now remember.
How shall I—say—return your generous goodness?
O, there is nothing you, as friends, can ask,
My grateful heart will not with pleasure grant you.

Comi. We thank thee, *Coriolanus*—But a *Roman*
Disdains that favour you refuse his country.

Corio.

Corio. [To the Volscian officers.] See that they be,
with due regard and safety,
Conducted back.

[To the Roman senators.]

I will suspend th' assault,
Till to these terms, of which we will not 'bate
The smallest part, your senate may have time
To send their latest answer. Then we cut
All further treaty off. *Romans*, farewell.

The End of the Third Act.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

TULLUS, *alone.*

WHAT is the mind of man? A restless scene
Of vanity and weakness; shifting still,
As shift the lights of our uncertain knowledge;
Or as the various gale of passion breathes.

None ever thought himself more deeply founded
On what is right, nor felt a nobler ardor,
Than I, when I invested *Caius Marcius*
With this ill-judg'd command. Now it appears
Distraction, folly, monstrous folly! meanness!
And down I plunge, betray'd ev'n by my virtue,
From gulph to gulph, from shame to deeper shame.

SCENE II.

TULLUS, GALEUS,

Gal. I listen'd, *Tullus*, to th' importaat scene
That lately pass'd before us, with most strict

Unpre-

CORIO LAN US. 419

Who think with us, and pine beneath the laurels
A Roman chief bestows.

Tul. Go, find them strait,
And bring them to the space before his tent;
'Tis there he will receive this deputation.
Then if he sinks beneath these women's prayers—
Or if he does not—But, *Volusius*, wait,
I give thee strictest charge to wait my signal.
Perhaps I may find means to free the *Volsci*
Without his blood. If not—we will be free.

The End of the Fourth Act.

ACT V. SCENE I.

Trumpets sounding.

The scene discovers the camp, a crowd of Volscian officers with files of soldiers drawn up as before. Enter Coriolanus, Tullus, Galesus, Volusius. The Roman ladies advance slowly from the depth of the stage, with Veturia the mother of Coriolanus, and Volumentia his wife, at their head, all clad in habits of mourning. Coriolanus stands at the head of the Volsci, surrounded by his liegions; but, when he perceives his mother and wife, after some struggle, he advances, and goes hastily to embrace them.

CORIO LAN US *advancing.*

LOWER your tases, liegions—

Oh *Veturia*!

Thou best of parents!

T

Vet.

Vet. Coriolanus, stop.

Whom am I to embrace? A son, or foe?

Say, in what light am I regarded here?

Thy mother, or thy captive?

Corio. Justly, Madam;

You check my fondness, that by nature hurry'd,

Forgot I was the general of the *Volsi*,

And you a deputy from hostile *Rome*.

[He goes back to his former station.]

I hear you with respect. Speak your commission.

Vet. Think not I come a deputy from Rome.

Rome, once rejected, scorns a second suit.

You have already heard whate'er the tongue

Of eloquence can plead, whate'er the wisdom

Of sacred age, the dignity of senates,

And virtue, can enforce. Behold me here,

Sent by the shades of your immortal fathers,

Sent by the genius of the *Marcian* line,

Commission'd by my own maternal heart,

To try the soft, yet stronger powers of Nature.

Thus authoriz'd, I ask, nay, claim a peace,

On equal, fair, and honourable terms,

To thee, to *Rome*, and to the *Volsian* people.

Grant it, my son! Thy mother begs it of thee,

Thy wife, the best, the kindest of her sex,

And these illustrious matrons, who have sooth'd

The gloomy hours thou hast been absent from us,

We, by whate'er is great and good in nature,

By every duty, by the gods, conjure thee,

To grant us peace, and turn on other foes

Thy arms, where thou may'st purchase virtuous glory.

*Corio. I should, Veturia, break those holy bonds
That hold the wide republic of mankind,*

Society,

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Trembling behind their ramparts—come! once more!
And see me put an end to prayers and treaty!

S C E N E V.

TULLUS, VOLUSIUS.

Vol. Tullus, 'tis well. This answers to my wishes.

Tul. How? What is well? That humbled *Rome*
once more

Shall deck him with the trophies of our arms?

Vol. And hop'st thou nothing from this blest event?
They who have often blasted mighty heroes,
Who oft have steln into the firmest hearts,
And melted them to folly; they, my friend,
Will do what wisdom never could effect.

Tul. Think'st thou the prayers and tears of wailing
women

Can shake the man, who with such cold disdain
Stood firm against those venerable consuls,
And spurn'd the genius of his kneeling country?

Vol. It was his pride alone that made him ours.
That passion kept him firm; the flattering charm
Of humbling those, who in their persons bore
The whole collected majesty of *Rome*.

These women are no proper objects for it:
He cannot triumph o'er his wife and mother.
On this my hopes are founded, that these women
May by their gentler influence subdue him.

Tul. Whate'er th'event, he shall no longer here,
As wave his passions, dictate peace or war.
Whether his stubborn soul maintain its firmness,
Or yield to female prayers, the *Volscian* honour

T 5

Will

418 C O R I O L A N U S

Will be alike betray'd. If *Rome* prevail,
He stops our conquering arms from her destruction ;
If he reject her suit, he reigns our tyrant.
But, by th' immortal gods ! his short-liv'd empire
Shall never see yon radiant sun descend.

Vol. Bless be those gods, that have at last inspir'd
thee

With resolution equal to thy cause,
The cause of liberty !——

Tul. Be sure, *Volusius*,

If that should happen which thy hopes portend ;
Should he, by Nature tam'd, disarm'd by love,
Respite the *Roman* doom—He seals his own :
By Heaven ! he dies.

Vol. Let me embrace thee, *Tullus* !

Now breaking from the cloud, which, like the sun,
Thy own too bounteous beams had drawn around
thee.

Tul. You was deceiv'd, my friend. When I with
tamefulness,

With tamefulness which astonish'd thy brave spirit,
Seem'd to submit to that unequal sway
He arrogated o'er me ; know, my heart
Ne'er swell'd so high as in that cruel moment,
My indignation, like th' imprison'd fire
Pent in the troubled breast of glowing *Ætna*,
Burnt deep and silent : But, collected now,
It shall beneath its fury bury *Marcus* !
'Tis fixt. Our tyrant dies.

Vol. *Tullus*, my sword

Here claims 'to be employ'd.—Nor mine alone—
There are some worthy *Volsci* still remaining,

Who

CORIO LANUS. 411

So now I dare to serve them by opposing,
 Ev'n with my single voice, th' impetuous torrent
 That hurries us away beyond the bounds
 Of temperate wisdom; and presume to tell thee,
 It is thy passion, not thy prudence, dictates
 This haughty language.

Tul. Yes, it is my passion,
 A passion for the glory of my country,
 That scorns your narrow views of timid prudence.
 Our injur'd honour drew our swords, and never
 Shall they be sheath'd while I command the *Volscians*,
 Till *Rome* submits to *Antium*.

Gal. *Rome* will perish
 Ere she submit; and she has still her walls,
 The strength of her allies, her native valour,
 Which oft has sav'd her in the worst extremes,
 And, stronger yet than all, despair, to aid her.

Tul. All these will nought avail her, if our fears
 Come not to her assistance—But, *Gaius*,
 Why urge you this to me? Go, talk to *Marcus*.
 The war has given him all his pride could hope for,
 To see *Rome's* senate humbled at his feet.
 He now may wish to reign in peace at *Antium*,
 And thou, perhaps, art come an envoy from him,
 To learn if I shall prove a quiet subject.

Gal. Thro' this unguarded opening of my soul,
 I see what stings thee—Ah! beware of envy!
 If that pale fury seize thee, thou art lost!

Tullus, 'tis easier far, from the clear breast
 To keep out treacherous vice, than to expel it.
 Farewell. Remember I have done my duty.

[Goes out.]

Tul. [alone.] This man discerns my heart.—Well:
 What of that?

Am I afraid its movements should be seen?
 I, whose clear thoughts have never shunn'd the light,
 Must I now seek to hide them? O misfortune!
 To have reduc'd myself to such a state,
 So much beneath the greatness of my soul,
 That, like a coward, I must learn to practise
 The wretched arts of vile dissimulation!
 By Heaven, I will not do it—I will not stoop
 To veil my discontent a moment longer.
 But see! my rival comes, the happy *Marcus*.
 His haughty mien, his very looks, affront me.

SCENE III.

CORIOLANUS, TULLUS.

Corio. *Tullus*, I have receiv'd intelligence,
 That a strong body of the *Latin* troops
 Is in full march to raise the siege of *Rome*;
 Another day will bring them to its aid.
 But go thou forth, and lead the valiant bands,
 By thee commanded, to repel these succours.
 Go, and cut off from *Rome* its last resource.

Tul. I lead my troops from the great scene of
 action,
 From falling *Rome*, which, ere to-morrow's sun
 Shall set, may be our prey! sure you forget
 My rank and station—I disdain the service:
 Give it to some you may command. For me,
 I own no master but the *Volscean* states.
Rome is my object. I from *Antium* brought
 The noblest army ever shook her walls.

And

Unprejudic'd attention ; and have since
 Revolv'd it in my mind, both as a man,
 Ally'd to all mankind, and as a *Volscian*.
 Indeed our terms are high, and by the manner
 In which they were prescrib'd by *Coriolanus*,
 Are what we cannot hope will e'er be granted.
 They should be soften'd. Let us yield a little,
 Conscious ourselves, to a great nation's pride,
 The pride of human nature. Could the *Romans*
 Stoop to such peace, commanded by the sword
 They then were slaves, unworthy our alliance.

Tul. Gods! do I hear in thee, one of the chiefs
 Intrusted with the honour of the *Volsci*,
 An advocate for *Rome*?

Gal. I glory, *Tullus*,
 To own myself an advocate for peace.
 Peace is the happy natural state of man ;
 War his corruption, his disgrace—

Tul. His safeguard!
 His pride! his glory!—What but war, just war,
 Gave *Greece* her heroes? those who drew the sword
 (As we do now) against the sons of rapine;
 To quell proud tyrants, and to free mankind.

Gal. Yes, *Tullus*, when to just defence the warrior
 Confines his force, he is a worship'd name,
 Dear to mankind, the first and best of mortals!
 Yet still, if this can by soft means be done,
 And fair accommodation, that is better.
 Why should we purchase with the blood of thousands
 What may be gain'd by mutual just concession?
 Why give up peace, the best of human blessings,
 For the vain cruel pride of useless conquest?

Tul. These soothing dreams of philosophic quiet
 Are only fit for unfrequented shades.

410 CORIOLANUS.

The sage should quit the busy bustling world,
 Ill suited to his gentle meditations,
 And in some desert find that peace he loves.

Gal. Mistaken man ! Philosophy consists not
 In airy schemes, or idle speculations :
 The rule and conduct of all social life
 Is her great province. Not in lonely cells
 Obscure she lurks, but holds her heavenly light
 To senates and to kings, to guide their councils,
 And teach them to reform and bless mankind.
 All policy but her's is false and rotten ;
 All valour not conducted by her precepts
 Is a destroying fury sent from hell
 To plague unhappy man, and ruin nations.

Tul. To stop the waste of that destroying fury,
 Is the great cause and purpose of this war.
 Art thou a friend to peace?—subdue the *Romans*.
 Who, who, but they, have turn'd this ancient land,
 Where, from *Saturnian* times, harmonious concord
 Still lov'd to dwell, into a scene of blood,
 Of endless discord, and perpetual rapine?
 The sword, the vengeful sword, must drain away
 This boiling blood, that thus disturbs the nations?
 Talk not of terms. It is a vain attempt
 To bind th' ambitious and unjust by treaties :
 These they elude a thousand specious ways ;
 Or, if they cannot find a fair pretext,
 They blush not in the face of Heaven to break them.

Gal. Why then affronted Heaven will combat for us.
 Set justice on our side, and then my voice
 Shall be as loud for war as thine ; my sword
 Shall strike as deep ; at least my blood shall flow
 As freely, *Tullus*, in my country's cause.
 But as I then would die to serve the *Volscians*,

So

I nor disdain'd nor fear'd to ask protection.
 You gave me all I ask'd, you gave me more,
 With noble warmth of heart! which to esteem
 Added the ties of gratitude and friendship:
 Whatever since, in council, or in arms,
 Has been by me achiev'd, was done for thee.
 My glory all was thine. The palms I gain'd
 Only compos'd a garland for his brow,
 Who rais'd this banish'd man to tread on *Rome*.

Tul. To tread on him who rais'd him—That, I
 know,

Is thy ambitious purpose; but be certain,
 However *Rome* may bend beneath thy fortune,
 Thou shalt not find an easy conquest here.

Corio. May *Jove* with lightning strike me to the
 centre,

If from the day I saw thy face at *Antium*,
 My heart has ever form'd one secret thought
 To hurt thy honour, or depress thy greatness:
 I was thy friend, thy soldier, and thy servant.
 But now I will as openly avow,
 Thy jealousy has, with envenom'd breath,
 Made such a sudden ravage in our friendship,
 I know not what to think.—

Tul. Think me thy foe.
 There is no lasting friendship with the proud.

Corio. Nor with the jealous—But of this enough.
 Come, let us turn our fire a nobler way:
 We have a worthier quarrel to pursue.—
 It were unjust, dishonourable, base,
 Our pride should hurt the *Volscian* cause.

Tul. No, *Marcus*,
 I mean to guard it better for the future:
 The *Volscian* cause is safest with a *Volscian*.

T 4

I there—

416 CORIOLANUS.

I therefore claim, insist upon my right;
That you shall yield me my command in turn.
The first attack was yours: 'Tis scanty justice,
The second should be mine.

Corio. Tullus, 'tis yours.

Oh, it imports not which of us command!
Give me the lowest rank among your troops:
All *Italy* will know, the voice of fame
Will tell all future times, that I was present;
That *Coriolanus* in the *Volscian* army
Assisted, when imperial *Rome* was sack'd;
The city which, while he maintain'd her cause,
Invincible herself, made *Antium* tremble.

Tul. What arrogant presumption!

SCENE IV.

To them VOLUSIUS, entering hastily.

Tul. Ha! *Volusius*,

Thy looks declare some message of importance.

Vol. Tullus, they do—It was to find thee, *Marcus*.
To thee a second deputation comes,
Thy mother, and thy wife, with a long train
Of all the noblest ladies *Rome* can boast,
In mourning habits clad, approach our camp,
Preceded by a herald, to demand
Another audience of thee.

Corio. How, *Volusius*!

Said you, the *Roman* ladies! Low, indeed,
Must be the state of *Rome*, when thus her matrons
She sends amidst the tumults of a camp,
To beg protection for the men, who lie

Trembling

And shall I now, on that decisive day,
 Doom'd by the gods to lay her pride in ashes,
 Shall I be absent from the glorious work?
 It is the highest outrage ev'n to think it.—
 Just gods! dost thou presume to give thy orders
 To me? to me! thy equal in command?
 Nay, thy superior! Was it not my hand,
 My lavish hand, bestow'd thy power upon thee?
 And know, proud *Roman*, that the man who gave it
 Can at his will resume it.

Corio. I propos'd this,
 This expedition to thee as thy friend,
 Not as thy general, *Tullus*. We are both
 Commanders here; and for my share of power,
 Whene'er the council of the *Volscian* states,
 Who cloath'd me with it, shall again demand it,
 I at their feet will lay it down, persuaded,
 The canker'd tongue of Envy's self must own,
 That by my service I have well deserv'd it.

Tul. Was it to them, or me, you hither came
 To crave protection? Was not then your fortune,
 Your liberty, your life, at my disposal?
 I rais'd you from the dust, a wretched exile,
 An outcast, helpless, friendless, driven to beg,
 The lowest refuge which despair can seek
 Shelter amidst thy foes. My pitying goodness
 Protected, trusted, and believ'd you grateful.
 O ill-plac'd confidence!——

Corio. Immortal gods!
 Hear I these words from *Tullus*!

Tul. What for all this
 Is thy return? Pride; self-sufficiency;
 Councils apart from mine; despotic orders;
 The glory of the war all pilfer'd from me:

414 CORIOLANUS.

And, to complete the whole, a *Latin* army
Now conjur'd up to draw me from the siege;
Till, by cajoling our tame chiefs, and dazzling
The senseless eyes of the low mob of soldiers,
Thou shalt be solely seated in the power
Which, thank my folly! now is shar'd betwixt us.

Corio. O indignation!—Down, thou swelling
heart—

I will be calm—I will.—Thou dost accuse me
Of the worst vice that can debase mankind,
Of black ingratitude. On what foundations?
What have I done to merit such a charge?
Is it my fault, if in the *Volsian* army
My name is as rever'd and great as thine?
Can I forbid authority, and fame,
To follow merit and success?—You know
The man whom you employ'd, and should have known
He would not be a cypher in employment.

Tul. Think'st thou my heart can better brook than
thine

To be that cypher! that dishonour'd tool!
Subservient to th' ambition of another?
Gods! I had rather live a drudging peasant,
Unknown to glory, in some *Alpin* village;
Than at the head of these victorious legions.
Bear the high name of chief, without the power!
No, *Marcus*, no. I will command indeed:
And thou shalt learn, with all the *Volsian* army,
To treat their general with respect.

Corio. Respect! :

O *Tullus*! *Tullus*! by the Powers divine!
I bore thee once respect, as high as man
Can shew to man. From thee, my foe, my rival,
I nor

CORIOLANUS. 427

Vet. To die, while *Rome* is free,
To seize the moment ere thou art her tyrant.

Corio. O use thy power more justly! Set not thus
My treacherous heart in arms against my reason.
Here! here! thy dagger will be well employ'd;
Strike here, and reconcile my fighting duties.

Vet. Off!—Set me free!—Think'st thou that
grasp, which binds
My feeble hand, can fetter too my will?
No, my proud son! Thou canst not make me live;
If *Rome* must fall!—No power on earth can do it!

Corio. Pity me, generous *Veturi*!—You are
men—

Must it then be?—Confusion!—Do I yield?
What is it? Is it weakness? Is it virtue?—
Well!

Vet. What? Speak!

Corio. O, no!—my stifled words refuse
A passage to the throes that wring my heart.

Vet. Nay, if thou yieldest, yield like *Coriolanus*;
And what thou do'st, do nobly.

Corio. (quitting her hand.) There!—

'Tis done!—

Thine is the triumph, Nature!

[To *Veturia* in a low tone of voice.

Ah, *Veturia*!

Rome by thy aid is sav'd—but thy son-lost.

Vet. He never can be lost, who saves his country.

Corio. (turning to the Roman ladies.) Ye matrons;
guardians of the *Roman* safety,
You to the senate may report this answer.

We grant the truce you ask. But on these terms:
That *Rome*, mean-time, shall to a peace agree,

Fair,

428 CORIOLANUS.

Fair, equal, just, and such as may secure
The safety, rights, and honour of the *Volsci*.

[*To the troops.*]

Volsci, we raise the siege. Go, and prepare,
By the first dawn, for your return to *Antium*.

[*As the troops retire, and Coriolanus turns
to the Roman ladies ;*]

Tul. (*to Volufius aside.*) 'Tis as we wish'd, *Volu-*
fius—To your station.

But mark me well—Till thou shalt hear my call,
I charge thee not to stir. One offer more
My honour bids me make to this proud man,
Before we strike the blow—If he rejects it,
His blood be on his head.

Vol. Well ! I obey your

[*He goes out.*]

Corio. Be it thy care, *Galefus*, that a safeguard
Attend these noble matrons back to *Rome*.

S C E N E II.

CORIOLANUS, TULLUS.

Corio. I plainly, *Tullus*, by your looks discern
You disapprove my conduct.

Tul. *Caius Marcius,*

I mean not to assail thee with the c'amour
Of loud reproaches, and the war of words ;
But, pride apart, and all that can pervert
The light of steady reason, here to make
A candid fair proposal.

Corio.

When proof against the tears of such a parent ?
 I dare not urge what to thy mother thou
 So firmly hast deny'd——But I must weep——
 Must weep, if not thy harsh severity,
 At least thy situation. O permit me

[*Taking his hand.*]

To shed my gushing tears upon thy hand !
 To press it with the cordial lips of love !
 And take my last farewell !

Corio. Yet, yet, my soul,

Be firm, and persevere——

Volum. Ah, *Coriolanus* !

Is then this hand, this hand to me devoted,
 The pledge of nuptial love, that has so long
 Protected, bless'd, and shelter'd us with kindness,
 Now lifted up against us ? Yet I love it,
 And, with submissive veneration, bow
 Beneath th' affliction which it heaps upon us.
 But, oh ! what nobler transports would it give thee !
 What joy beyond expression ! could'st thou once
 Surmount the furious storm of fierce revenge,
 And yield thee to the charms of love and mercy.
 Oh, make the glorious trial !

Corio. Mother ! wife !

Are all the powers of Nature leagu'd against me ?
 I cannot ! will not !—Leave me, my *Volumnia* !

Volum. Well, I obey—How bitter thus to part !
 Upon such terms to part ! perhaps for ever !
 But tell me, ere I hence unroot my feet,
 When to my lonely home I shall return,
 What from their father, to our little slaves,
 Unconscious of the shame to which you doom them,
 What

What shall I say ?

[*Pausing : He highly agitated.*

Nay, tell me, *Coriolanus* !

Cor. Tell thee ! What shall I tell thee ? See these tears !

These tears will tell thee what exceeds the power
Of words to speak, whate'er the son, the husband,
And father, in one complicated pang,
Can feel—but leave me ; even in pity leave !
Cease, cease, to torture me, my dear *Volumnia* !
You only tear my heart ; but cannot shake it ;
For by th' immortal gods, the dread avengers
Of broken faith !——

Volum. (kneeling.) O swear not, *Coriolanus* !
O vow not our destruction !

Vet. Daughter, rise—

Let us no more, before the *Volscian* people
Expose ourselves a spectacle of shame—
It is in vain to try to melt a breast,
That to the best affections Nature gives us
Prefers the worst—Hear me, proud man ! I have
A heart as stout as thine. I came not hither,
To be sent back rejected, baffled, sham'd,
Hateful to *Rome*, because I am thy mother :
A *Roman* matron knows, in such extremes,
What part to take—And thus I came provided.

[*Drawing from under her robe a dagger.*

Go ! barbarous son ! go ! double parricide !
Rush o'er my corse to thy belov'd revenge !
Tread on the bleeding breast of her, to whom
Thou ow'st thy life !—Lo, thy first victim !

Corio. Ha ! [*Seizing her hand.*
What dost thou mean ?

Vet.

CORIO LANUS. 431

Corio. Ha! traitor!

Tul. First, to thy own country, traitor!
And traitor, now, to mine!

Corio. Ye heavenly Powers!
I shall break loose—My rage—But let us part—
Lest my rash hand should do a hasty deed
My cooler thought forbids.

Tul. Be gone—Return—
To head the *Roman* troops. I grant thee quittance
Full and complete of all these obligations
Thou hast so oft insultingly complain'd
Fetter'd thy hands. They now are free. I court
The worst thy sword can do: whilst thou from me
Hast nothing to expect, but sure destruction.
Quit then this hostile camp. Once more I tell thee,
Thou art not here one single hour in safety.

Corio. Think'st thou to fright me hence?

Tul. Thou wilt not then?
Thou wilt not take the safety which I offer?

Corio. Till I have clear'd my honour in your
council,

And prov'd before them all, to thy confusion,
The falshood of thy charge; as soon in battle
I would before thee fly, and howl for mercy,
As quit the station they have here assign'd me.

Tul. Volufius! Hoa!

SCENE

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[*Pausing : He highly agitated.*]

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Cor. Tell thee ! What shall I tell thee ? See these tears !

These tears will tell thee what exceeds the power
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I would before thee fly, and howl for mercy,
As quit the station they have here assign'd me.

Tul. Volufius! Hoa!

SCENE

SCENE III.

To them VOLUSIUS, and Conspirators with their
swords drawn.

Tul. Seize and secure the traitor?

Corio. (laying his hand upon his sword.) Who dares
approach me dies!

Vol. Die thou!

[As Coriolanus draws his sword, Volusius and the Conspirators rush upon and stab him. Tullus standing by without, having drawn his sword.

Corio. [endeavouring to free himself.] Off!—Villains!

[Falling.

O murdering slaves! Assassinating cowards! [Dies.

SCENE IV.

[Upon the noise of the tumult, enter hastily to them
GALESUS, the other deputies of the Volscian States,
Officers, friends of Coriolanus, and TITUS with
a large band of soldiers

Gal. (as he enters.) Are we a nation rul'd by laws,
or fury?

How; whence this tumult? [Pausing.

Gods! what do I see!

The noble *Marcus* slain!

Tul. You see a traitor

Punish'd as he deserv'd, the Roman yoke

That thrall'd us broken, and the *Volsci* free.

Corio. Speak, I hear thee.

Tul. I need not tell thee, that I have perform'd
My utmost promise. Thou hast been protect'd;
Hast had thy amplest, most ambitious wish:
Thy wounded pride is heal'd, thy dear revenge
Completely sated; and to crown thy fortune,
At the same time, thy peace with *Rome* restor'd.
Thou art no more a *Volscian*, but a *Roman*,
Return, return; thy duty calls upon thee,
Still to protect the city thou hast sav'd:
It still may be in danger from our arms.

Corio. Insolent man, is this thy fair proposal?

Tul. Be patient—Hear me speak—I have already
From *Rome* protect'd thee; now from the *Volsci*,
From their just vengeance, I will still protect thee.
Retire, I will take care thou may'st with safety.

Corio. With safety!—Heav'ns!—And think'st
thou, *Coriolanus*

Will stoop to thee for safety? No! my safeguard
Is in myself, a bosom void of blame,
And the great gods, protectors of the just—
Oh, 'tis an act of cowardice and baseness,
To seize the very time my hands were fetter'd,
By the strong chain of former obligations,
'The safe sure moment to insult me—Gods!
Were I now free, as on that day I was,
When at *Corioli* I tam'd thy pride,
This had not been.

Tul. Thou speak'st the truth: It had not.
Oh, for that time again! Propitious gods,
If you will bless me, grant it!—Know for that,
For that dear purpose, I have now propos'd
Thou should'st return. I pray thee, *Marcus*, do it!
And

And we shall meet again on nobler terms.

Corio. When to the *Volsci* I have clear'd my faith,
Doubt not I shall find means to meet thee nobly.
We then our generous quarrel may decide
In the bright front of some embattled field,
And not in private brawls, like fierce barbarians,

Tul. Thou canst not hope acquittal from the *Volsci*.

Corio. I do— Nay more, expect their approbation,
Their thanks! I will obtain them such a peace
As thou durst never ask; a perfect union
Of their whole nation with imperial *Rome*
In all her privileges, all her rights.

By the just gods, I will! What would'st thou more?

Tul. What would I more! proud *Roman*; This
I would;

Fire the curs'd forest, where these *Roman* wolves
Haunt and infest their nobler neighbours round them;
Extirpate from the bosom of this land
A false perfidious people, who, beneath
The mask of freedom, are a combination
Against the liberty of human-kind,
The genuine seed of out-laws and of robbers.

Corio. The seed of gods!—'Tis not for thee, vain
boaster!

'Tis not for such as thou, so often spar'd
By her victorious sword, to talk of *Rome*,
But with respect and awful veneration.
Whate'er her blots, whate'er her giddy factions,
There is more virtue in one single year
Of *Roman* story, than your *Volscian* annals
Can boast thro' all your creeping dark duration!

Tul. I thank thy rage. This full displays the
traitor.

Corio.

And grasps of all the general worth and virtue.
 Suppose, my son, that I to thee had been
 A harsh obdurate parent, ev'n unjust :
 How would the monstrous thought with horror strike
 thee,

Of plunging, from revenge, thy raging steel
 Into her breast, who nurs'd thy infant years!—

Corio. Rome is no more ! that *Rome* which nurs'd
 my youth ;

That *Rome*, conducted by *Patrician* virtue,
 She is no more ! My sword shall now chastise
 These sons of pride and dirt ! Her upstart tyrants !
 Who have debas'd the noblest state on earth
 Into a sordid democratic faction.

Why will my mother join her cause to theirs ?

Vet. Forbid it, *Jove* ! that I should e'er distinguish
 My interest from the general cause of *Rome* !

Or live to see a foreign hostile arm

Reform the abuses of our land of freedom. [*Pausing.*]

But 'tis in vain, I find, to reason more.

Is there no way to reach thy filial heart,

Once fam'd as much for piety as courage ?

Oft hast thou justly triumph'd, *Coriolanus* ;

Now yield one triumph to thy widow'd mother ;

And send me back amidst the loud acclaims,

The grateful transports of deliver'd *Rome*,

The happiest far, the most renown'd of women !

Corio. Why, why, *Veturia*, wilt thou plead in
 vain ?

Tull. (*aside to Vol.*) See, see, *Volusus*, how the
 strong emotions

Of powerful nature shake his inmost soul !

See

See how they tear him.—If he long resists them,
He is a god, or something worse than man.

Vet. O *Marcus*, *Marcus*! canst thou treat me
thus?

Canst thou complain of *Rome's* ingratitude,
Yet be to me so cruelly ungrateful?
To me! who anxious rear'd thy youth to glory?
Whose only joy, these many years, has been,
To boast that *Coriolanus* was my son?
And dost thou then renounce me for thy mother?
Spurn me before these chiefs, before those soldiers,
That weep thy stubborn cruelty? Art thou
The hardest man to me in this assembly?
Look at me! Speak!

[*Pausing, during which he appears in
great agitation.*

Still dost thou turn away?
Inexorable? silent?—Then, behold me,
Behold thy mother, at whose feet thou oft
Hast kneel'd with fondness, kneeling now at thine,
Wetting thy stern tribunal with her tears.

Corio. (*raises her.*) *Veturia*, rise. I cannot see
thee thus.

It is a sight uncomely, to behold
My mother at my feet, and that to urge
A suit, relentless honour must refuse.

Volum. (*advancing.*) Since, *Coriolanus*, thou dost
still retain,

In spite of all thy mother now has pleaded,
Thy dreadful purpose, ah! how much in vain
Were it for me to join my supplications!
The voice of thy *Volumnia*, once so pleasing;
How shall it hope to touch the husband's heart,

When

C O R I O L A N U S. 421

Society, together ; I should grow
A wretch, unworthy to be call'd thy son ;
I should, with my *Volumnia's* fair esteem,
Forfeit her love ; these matrons would despise me—
Could I betray the *Volscean* cause, thus trusted,
Thus recommended to me—No, my mother,
You cannot sure, you cannot ask it of me !

Vet. And does my son so little know me ? me !
Who took such care to form his tender years,
Left to my conduct by his dying father ?
Have I so ill-deserv'd that trust ? alas !
Am I so low in thy esteem, that thou
Should e'er imagine I could urge a part
Which in the least might stain the *Marcian* honour ?
No, let me perish rather ! perish all !
Life has no charms compar'd with spotless glory !
I only ask, thou would'st forbid thy troops
To waste our lands, and to assault yon city,
Till time be giv'n for mild and righteous measures.
Grant us but one year's truce : mean while thou may'st,
With honour and advantage to both nations,
Between us mediate a perpetual peace.

Corio. Alas ! my mother ! that were granting all

Vet. Canst thou refuse me such a just petition,
The first request thy mother ever made thee ?
Canst thou to her intreaties, prayers, and tears,
Prefer a savage, obstinate revenge ?
Have love and nature lost all power within thee .

Corio. No, in my heart they reign as strong as
ever.

Come, I conjure you, quit ungrateful *Rome*,
Come, and complete my happiness at *Antium*,
You, and my dear *Volumnia*—There, *Veturia*,
There

424 CORIOLANUS.

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You, and my dear *Volumnia*—There, *Veturia*,
There

There shall you see with what respect the *Volsci*
Will treat the wife and mother of their general.

Vet. Treat me thyself with more respect, my son;
Nor dare to shock my ears with such propofals.
Shall I desert my country, I who come
To plead her cause? Ah, no! A grave in *Rome*
Would better please me, than a throne at *Antium*.
How hast thou thus forsaken all my precepts?
How hast thou thus forgot thy love to *Rome*?
O *Coriolanus*, when with hostile arms,
With fire and sword you enter'd on our borders,
Did not the fostering air, that breathes around us,
Allay thy guilty fury, and instil
A certain native sweetness thro' thy soul?
Did not your heart thus murmur to itself:
"These walls contain whatever can command
"Respect from virtue, or is dear to nature,
"The monuments of piety and valour,
"The sculptur'd forms, the trophies of my fathers,
"My household gods, my mother, wife and children!"
Corio. Ah! you seduce me with too tender
views!—

These walls contain the most corrupt of men,
A base seditious herd; who trample order,
Distinction, justice, laws, beneath their feet,
Insolent foes to worth, the foes of virtue!

Vet. Thou hast not thence a right to lift thy
hand.

Against the whole community, which forms
Thy ever-sacred country—That consists
Not of coeval citizens alone:
It knows no bounds, it has a retrospect
To ages past; it looks on those to come;

And

CORIO LANUS. 433

Gal. Hear me, great *Jove*! Hear, all you injur'd Powers

Of friendship, hospitality, and faith!
By that heroic blood, which from the ground
Reeking to you for vengeance cries, I swear!
This impious breach of your eternal laws,
This daring outrage on the *Volscian* honour,
Shall find in me a rigorous avenger!
On the same earth, polluted by their crime,
I will not live with these unpunish'd ruffians!

Tul. This deed is mine: I claim it all!—These men,

These valiant men, were but my instruments,
To punish him who to our face betray'd us.
We shall not fear to answer to the *Volsci*,
In a full council of the states at *Antium*,
The glorious charge of having stabb'd their traitor!

Gal. *Titus*, till then secure them.

[*Tullus and Conspirators are led off.*

[*Gaius, standing over the body of Coriolanus, after a short pause proceeds.*

Volscian fathers,

And ye, brave soldiers, see an awful scene,
Demanding serious solemn meditation.
This man was once the glory of his age,
Disinterested, just, with every virtue
Of civil life adorn'd, in arms unequal'd.
His only blot was this; that, much provok'd,
He rais'd his vengeful arm against his country.
And, lo! the righteous gods have now chastis'd him,
Even by the hands of those for whom he fought.

Whatever private views and passions plead,
No cause can justify so black a deed.

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These

These, when the angry tempest clouds the soul,
 May darken Reason, and her course controul ;
 But when the prospect clears, her startled eye
 Must from the treacherous gulph with horror fly,
 On whose wild wave, by stormy passions tost,
 So many hapless wretches have been lost.
 Then be this truth the star by which we steer,
Above ourselves our COUNTRY should be dear.

The End of the Fifth Act.

EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs. WOFFINGTON.

*WELL! Gentlemen! and are you still so vain
 To treat our sex with arrogant disdain ;
 And think to you alone, by partial Heaven,
 Superior sense, and sovereign power are given ;
 When, in the story told to-night, you find,
 With what a boundless sway we rule the mind,
 And by a few soft words of ours, with ease
 Can turn the proudest hearts just where we please?*

*If an old mother had such powerful charms,
 To stop a stubborn Roman's conquering arms,—
 Soldiers and statesmen of these days, with you
 What think you would a fair young mistress do?
 If with my grave discourse, and wrinkled face,
 I thus could bring a hero to disgrace,
 How absolutely may I hope to reign,
 Now I am turn'd to my own shape again!
 However, I will use my empire well;
 And, if I have a certain magic spell,
 Or in my tongue, or wit, or shape, or eyes,
 Which can subdue the strong, and fool the wise,
 Be not alarm'd: I will not interfere
 In state affairs, nor undertake to steer
 The helm of government,—as we are told
 These female politicians did of old.
 Such dangerous heights I never wish'd to climb——
 Thank Heaven, I better can employ my time——
 Ask you to what my power I shall apply?
 To make my subjects blest, is my reply.
 My purposes are gracious all, and kind:
 Some may be told—and some may be divin'd:
 One, which at present I have most at heart,
 To you without reserve I will impart:
 It is my sovereign will,—Hear, and obey,—
 Do you with candour treat this Orphan Play.*

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